

LEARNED HELPLESS TO MASTERY ORIENTATION
TRANSITION PROCESS

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by Lucinda R. Green
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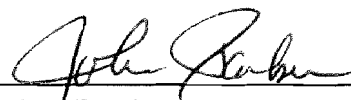
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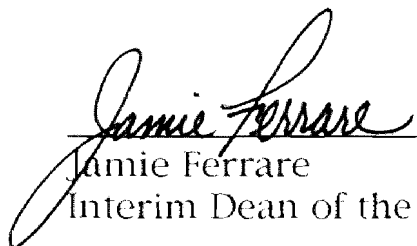
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Learned Helpless to Mastery Orientation Transition Process

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Background: Individuals who explain their success and failure experience in the Mastery Oriented attributional pattern of ability and sufficient or insufficient effort, experience pride in their successes, feel they can repeat successful experiences, see a relationship between outcome and effort, and are willing to try achievement tasks again. Individuals who explain their success and failure experience in the Learned Helpless attributional pattern attribute success to luck and ease of task, and failure to inability, experiencing shame in both their success and failure experiences. They feel they cannot repeat success experiences or correct failure experiences. They do not see a relationship between outcome and effort; and to avoid negative emotional consequences, they are not willing to try achievement tasks again.

Because it is desirable to correct the debilitating consequence of lack of persistence and avoidance, the researcher looked at the causal factors that bring about a change in an individual from a state of Learned Helplessness to a state of Mastery Orientation by studying individuals who have experienced this change without experiencing intentional retraining strategies.

Methodology: In order to explore and/or discover the full breadth of the LH to MO change phenomena, the researcher chose to explore this change through the recollections of

individuals revisiting experiences that occurred as a consequence of simply going about their daily lives. The change phenomena, whatever they would eventually be found to be, were an enmeshed part of each participant's life story. Therefore, the researcher chose to use the Naturalistic research methodology that provides for observation in the natural setting from which the data arises to create joint construction of reality.

Findings: Three patterns were found to be present across the participants: Pattern One: Accepting Person. Pattern Two: Critical Consciousness-Raising Event. Pattern Three: Sense of Responsibility.

Conclusions: Based on the findings it becomes evident that it is wise for advisors and professors in college settings to reevaluate their attitudes toward students and to recognize the power of mutually respectful relationships in which students can feel safe and growth can occur. It would also be wise to set up classroom systems in which students can experience acceptance from their peers, learn to work cooperatively in noncompetitive environments, and have a place to practice new skills and ideas. It would also seem important to become involved in student's crisis circumstances and use them to teach responsibility and offer support and caring.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Adults are returning to college to complete Bachelors degrees in record numbers. For some of these learners, their past histories are rich with success experiences; but for others their past histories provide memories, rather, of repeated failure. An individual's perceptions (whether accurate or inaccurate) of these repeated successes or failures and low performance, significantly influence the success or failure of her or his current endeavors.

A quest to understand what motivates some to perceive themselves as successful learners and some to perceive themselves as unsuccessful learners, not surprisingly provides no single answer. There are instead many different variables interacting together to provide answers; parts interacting to embrace truth. One theory that helps us understand an individual's perception of his or her success or failure experiences is Attribution theory.

Attribution theory's underlying assumption is that humans are motivated to attain a causal picture of the world. That is, they want to know "why" an event has occurred (Weiner, 1989). Their answer to "why" is instrumental in assigning meaning to an event.

Individuals make perceptions and assign meaning in two basic attributional patterns: Learned Helpless and Mastery Oriented. (These two patterns are explained in detail starting on page 23.) The purpose of the research reported here was to study individuals who have changed from a Learned Helplessness (LH) attributional pattern to a Mastery Oriented (MO) attributional pattern, in order to gain a dynamic understanding of causal factors that facilitated individual movement from one state to the other. (Definitions of the terms Learned Helpless and Mastery Oriented and explanations of the motivation theories are provided in Chapter one.)

Definition of Attribution Theory

Attribution theory is "concerned with perceptions [ascriptions] of causality, or the perceived [ascribed] reasons for a particular event's occurrence" (Weiner, 1989, p. 328). One's ascriptions form a complex system of thoughts and feelings. These ascriptions are used to "both postdict (interpret) and to predict the outcome of an achievement-related event" (Weiner, 1989, p. 328).

It is important to note that "perceptions of causality are an ascription imposed by the perceiver; causes per se are not directly observable. . . . Perceptions of causality are constructed by the perceiver because they render the environment more

meaningful" (Weiner, 1989, p. 280). In other words, they help us understand and explain our environment.

Ascriptions are classified along three dimensions: Locus of control (internal and external), stability (stable and unstable), and controllability (controllable and uncontrollable) (Weiner, 1986). Generally, individuals ascribe meaning to their successes and failures using four reasons: ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck (Bar-Tal & Darom, 1979).

Ascriptions are also the source of feeling good, bad, or indifferent about performance. They are systematically related to different kinds of subsequent behaviors. For example: if one believes one has control in a failure situation, one may be motivated to work harder next time. However, if one believes one does not have control, one may give up after failure (Gage & Berliner, 1988).

MacMillan, Keogh, and Jones (1986, p. 703) summarize the definition of Attribution Theory saying, "attributions are viewed as efforts to 'make sense of' or to interpret the causes of events; these perceived causes are presumed to determine subsequent affective responses, expectancies, and behavior." (A detailed explanation of Attribution Theory begins on page 12.)

Attribution theory is just one of many motivation theories. In the next section the major motivational theories are categorized by belief and briefly discussed.

Overview of Motivation Theories

All motivation theorists seek to answer the question, Why do we think and act as we do? How a theorist answers that question places him or her into one of three broad categories of motivation theorists: Need Reduction theorist, Expectancy-Value theorist, or Mastery and Growth theorist (see Figure 1).

Needs Reduction theorists believe we are motivated to satisfy our basic need. Expectancy Value Theorist believe we are motivated to attain a valuable goal. Mastery and Growth Theorists believe humans are motivated to explain themselves and their environment. The following sections briefly explain these theories.

Need Reduction Theories

Two motivation theorists are considered need reduction theorists: Freud (Freudian psychoanalytic theory) and Hull (Hullian drive theory). Both believe that behavior is caused and that the causes can be identified. Both believe in the principle of homeostasis (we act to satisfy unfulfilled needs)

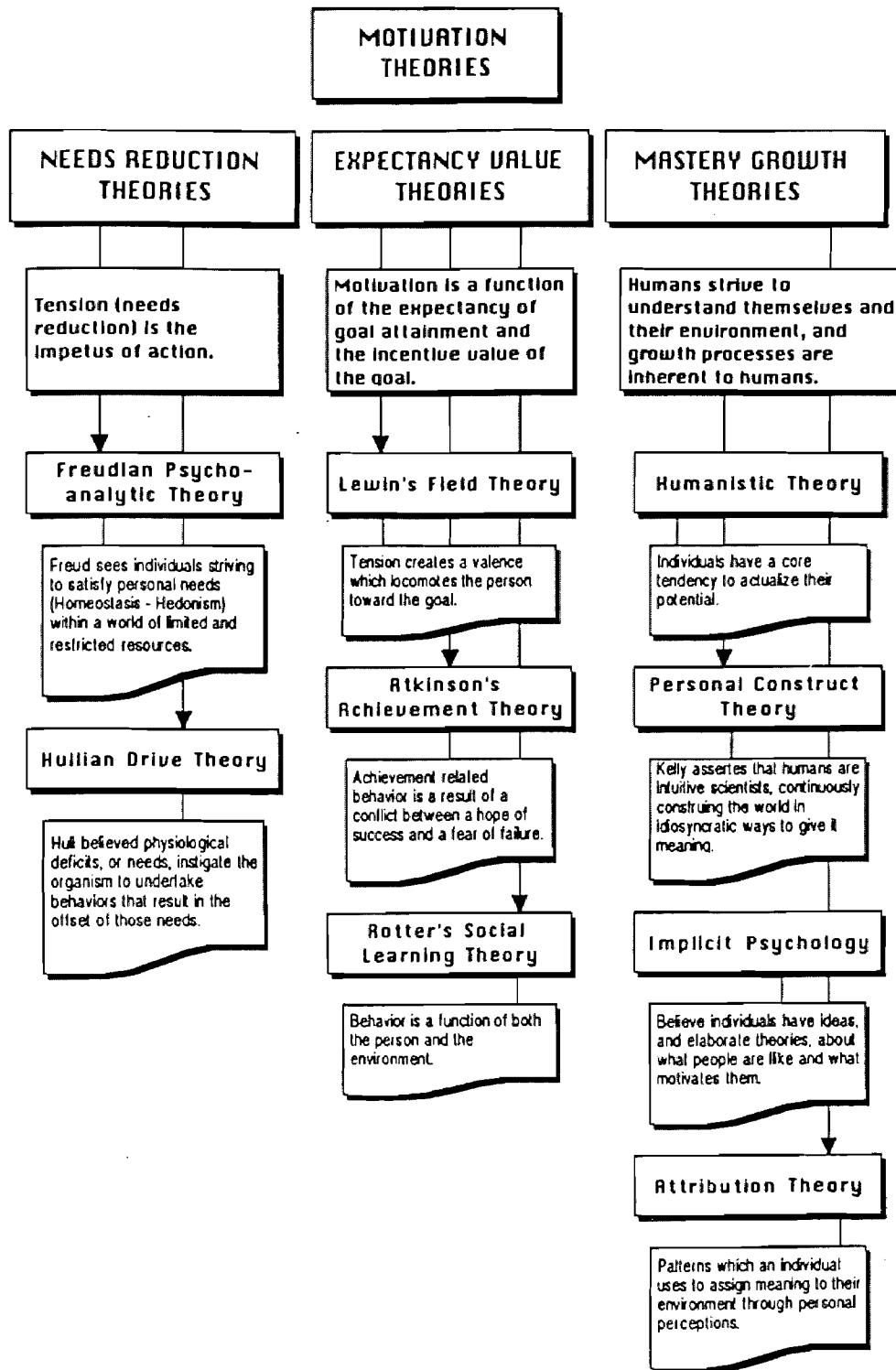


Figure 1. Nine motivation schools of thought within three motivation categories.

and the principle of hedonism (the fulfillment of needs is satisfying and results in quiescence) (Freud, 1915; Hull, 1943).

Freud (1915) believes individuals try to satisfy their needs by adapting their behavior so they can function in the world, meet their needs, and return to a state of comfort. He feels this creates an internal versus external struggle. We want to satisfy our internal needs but can only do so by tapping external resources in the world.

Hull (1943) believes humans behave in a way to reduce their needs. Hull defines these needs as primary animal drives: hunger, thirst, pain, warmth, elimination, rest, sleep, and activity. He feels when we experience one of the needs, we are in a state of disequilibrium and strive to satisfy this need and return to a state of equilibrium.

Drive theorist did not consider the cognitive process and its role in motivation. Thus, as motivation theorists recognized that cognition is a part of the motivation phenomena, Need Reduction Theories were replaced by the Expectancy Value Theories and later the Mastery Growth Theories.

Expectancy-Value Theories

Three motivation theories are grouped under Expectancy-Value Theories: Lewinian Field Theory, Achievement Motivation Theory, and Social Learning Theory. They are

grouped because these theorists believe motivation is a function of what we expect to attain and the incentive value of the goal we seek (Lewin, 1938; Atkinson, 1964; Rotter, 1975).

Lewinian Field Theory is the key transition theory between the needs reduction theories and the expectancy-value theories. Hedonism and homeostasis are key components of the needs reductions theories as they are in Field theory, but they are incorporated in a cognitive way stressing the perceived rather than the real world. For Example: Lewin believes first we wish to satisfy an internal need. Then we perceive an attractive solution in the world (Valence). Finally our desire to reach this goal motivates us to move in that direction until we reach the goal, satisfy our need, and return to a state of comfort (Lewin, 1938).

Achievement motivation is also an Expectancy-Value Theory, and Atkinson is the major Achievement Motivation theorist. Achievement motivation theory is concerned first with the hope of success, resulting in a feeling of pride; second with the fear of failure, resulting in the feeling of shame; and finally with the conflict this creates and the solution of the conflict. We either seek to achieve success (approach) and with it experience a feeling of pride, or seek to avoid failure and with it experience a feeling of shame (Atkinson, 1964).

Achievement motivation theory indicates there are three factors that determine our tendency to approach or to avoid a situation: motive (capacity to experience pride and shame), probability (the expectancy of a reward), and incentive (the value of success and failure). Atkinson (1964) feels we will either approach or avoid a task depending on which of the two factors is the strongest.

Social learning theorists believe that behavior is a function of both the person and the environment. They believe our behavior is influenced by the behavior we have learned from others, such as parents, teachers, friends, etc. They also believe our behavior varies in different situations depending on the value of the goal and whether we expect to succeed or fail (Rotter, 1975).

Mastery and Growth Theories

Mastery and Growth Theorist believe individuals try to understand themselves and their environment and that the mastery growth processes are instinctive. Attribution theory, Humanistic theory, Personal Construct theory, and Implicit Psychology are the main Mastery and Growth Theories. Since attribution theory is the subject of this study, a separate section is devoted to its discussion.

Humanists such as Rogers (1961) and Maslow (1943) believe that individuals feel an internal pressure to fully develop their inherited potential. The main areas of study have been self-concept and self-esteem.

George Kelly (1955) is the originator of personal construct theory. The theory deals with how individuals attempt to predict and control the events they experience. He assumed an individual thinks about a situation, assigns meaning to the situation according to his or her perceptions (personal constructs), and then acts accordingly. Emotions, such as anxiety, and guilt, etc., are consequences of an individual's construct systems. Individuals evaluate their constructs based on the emotional consequences they experience. They decide if their constructs are adequate or inadequate and change them as they choose.

Implicit psychologists believe individuals create elaborate theories, about what people are like and what motivates them. Although the theories they create are merely 'implicit,' they do influence their social reality. Moore (1973) gives an example of our implicit ideas about children. She indicates a mother may say "Hot, Hot" before placing hot food in front of her four year old, but would not before serving a dinner guest. The implicit understanding of the situation allows an individual to give the appropriate warning in the

appropriate situation, just as the implicit understanding of what people are like and what motivates them allows an individual to behave appropriately.

Comparisons

The central theme of all motivation theories is to answer the question, Why do organisms think and behave as they do? Attribution theorists believe individuals attempt to understand their environment by assigning meaning to events from which they can predict the outcome of future events (Weiner, 1989). Attribution Theory is most like the Mastery Growth theories. These theorists believe individuals strive to understand themselves and their environment and that growth processes are inherent to humans. Attribution theory is most unlike the Expectancy Value theories. These theorists believe motivation is a function of the expectancy of goal attainment and the incentive value of the goal. Attribution theory is also different from the Needs Reduction theories. These theorists believe tension is the impetus of action.

Within the broad scope of Mastery and Growth theories, Attribution Theory focuses on individual patterns used to assign meaning to the environment through personal perceptions, while Humanistic theory focuses on actualizing an individual's potential; Implicit Psychology focuses on implicit

motivations that influence social reality, and Personal Construct Theory focuses on how individuals construct and interpret their environment.

Attribution theorists have nothing in common with the Needs theorists. They do not believe individuals simply behave in a way to satisfy unfulfilled needs in order to return to a state of equilibrium or rest. They instead believe that behavior is determined by how the world is perceived. The Attribution theorist hold this belief in common with the Field theorist and the Humanistic theorist.

Attribution theory and Humanistic theory are purely cognitive theories (using information as the impetus for behavior). Drive theory is purely mechanistic (stimuli is the impetus of action). The Field, Achievement, and Social Learning theories mix both Cognitive and Mechanistic principles.

In sum, Attribution theory is most like the Mastery Growth theories. It is a cognitive theory believing that individuals seek to gain information as the impelling force for their behavior. Attribution theorists believe humans strive to understand themselves and their environment. Their basic principle of behavior is that individuals seek to gain information to explain their environment. Their focus is on

individual patterns used to assign meaning to the environment through personal perceptions.

As will become evident in the section, Explanation of Attribution Theory, an individual's perceptions of his or her ability, the effort he or she exerts, and the influence external forces have on the outcomes of situations, determines how an individual will respond to a situation. Because one's perceptions of internal factors (effort and ability) and external factors (luck and difficulty of task) are the foundation of attribution theory, the next section shows how Heider, the father of Attribution theory, developed this theory.

The Foundation of Attribution Theory

"Attribution theorists are concerned with perceptions of causality, or the perceived reasons for a particular event's occurrence. . . . It is important to note that perceptions of causality are an ascription imposed by the perceiver; causes per se are not directly observable" (Weiner, 1989, p. 280). Perceptions of causality are constructed by the perceiver because he or she assigns meaning to the environment.

Fritz Heider is recognized as the founder of attribution theory. Heider identifies his work as an "investigation of common-sense psychology" (Heider, 1958, p. 79). His theoretical framework was strongly influenced by Gestalt

psychology and Kurt Lewin. Heider is concerned about how individuals think about their environment. Heider believes behavior is a result of three factors: personal effort, personal ability, and environmental forces. A model of the development of Heider's theory is presented below (see Figure 2).

The model begins with Lewin's (1938) formula: $B = f(P, E)$, which means Outcome (B) is the function of Effective Personal Force (P) and Effective Environmental Force (E). Heider believes behavior (Outcome) depends on factors both within the person (Effective Personal Force) and within the environment (Effective Environmental Force) (Heider, 1958).

Heider (1958) further develops the idea of Effective Personal Force by dividing it into two factors: Motivation and Power. He explains each of these concepts by again dividing them into two factors. The first factor, Motivation, refers to the purpose of a person's behavior (intention) and to how hard he or she tries (exertion). Heider recombines intention and exertion and calls it "Trying." The second factor, Power, is defined as ability (innate capabilities) and strength (amount of ability).

After Heider combines intention and exertion and calls it Trying, it continues to be a factor of Effective Personal Force. However, Power (ability and strength), which is part of Effective Personal Force, is now combined with Effective

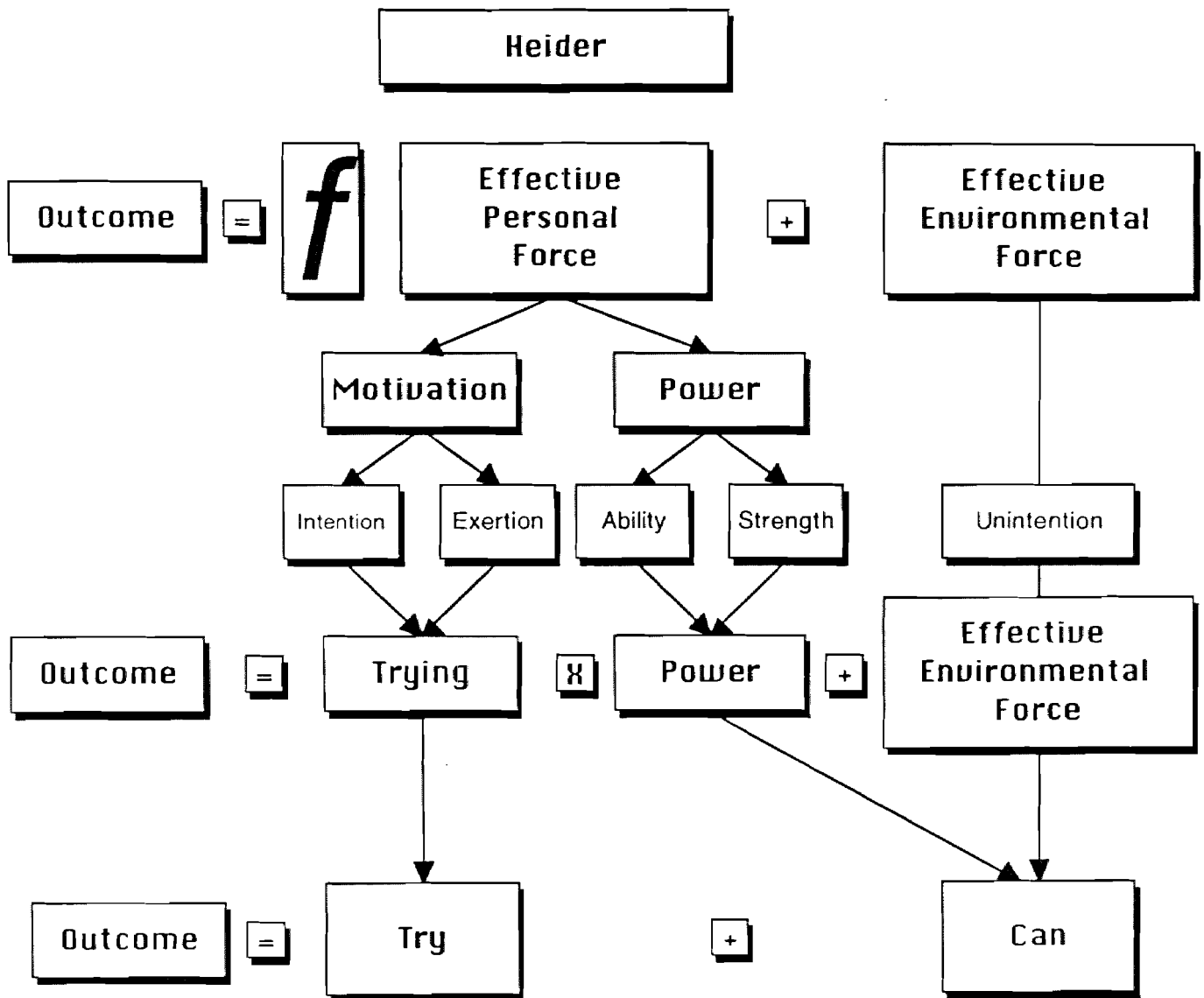


Figure 2. Heider's Naive Attributional Theory built on Gestalt Psychology and Lewin Theory.

Environmental Force to create "Can." "Can" is determined by how much power (ability and strength) one has and the degree of difficulty the environment presents. "Can" answers the question, Can the goal be attained? In other words, does one possess sufficient ability in the face of environmental challenges to reach the desired outcome (Heider, 1958).

Heider concludes, Outcome (behavior) is determined by two things: "Try" (personal effort) and "Can", a combination of power (amount of ability) and Effective Environmental Force (external factors). Thus, he reasons, behavior is determined by the degree of effort one exerts, the amount of ability one possesses, and the obstacles the environment holds (Heider, 1958).

Further, Heider (1958) shows how attributions to "Try" and "Can" influence success and failure experiences (see Figure 3). If "Try" (exertion: the degree of effort applied) is held constant, success is attributed to either high ability or easy task while failure is attributed to either low ability or difficult task (Heider, 1958).

Heider's work laid the foundation for the central problems that guide the thoughts of all investigators in this field. First, they consider the perceived causes of behavior, giving particular consideration to the distinction between internal or personal causality and external or environmental

causality (later identified as locus on control, one of three causal dimensions). Second, they consider the development of general laws that relate reasons individuals use to interpret their successes and failures. These reasons were later identified as causal antecedents, the most common of which are ability (from Heider's "Can"), effort (from Heider's "Trying"), and luck and ease of task (from Heider's "Effective Environmental Force") (see Figure 2). Third, they consider how causal inferences have been associated with various indexes of observed behavior. For example, both high ability and the ease of the task can explain success (see Figure 3) (Weiner, 1989).

Explanation of Attribution Theory

"Attribution theorists are concerned with perceptions of causality" (Weiner, 1989, p. 280). Perceptions of causality are simply the reasons individuals give to explain their successes and failures. They assign causes, or reasons, to events in an attempt to better understand their environment. Individuals use this perceived understanding to form expectations about the future. They decide how they will feel (good, bad, or indifferent) about their successes and failures; they decide what they expect to happen next; and they decide what actions they will take. All of these expectations are based on their

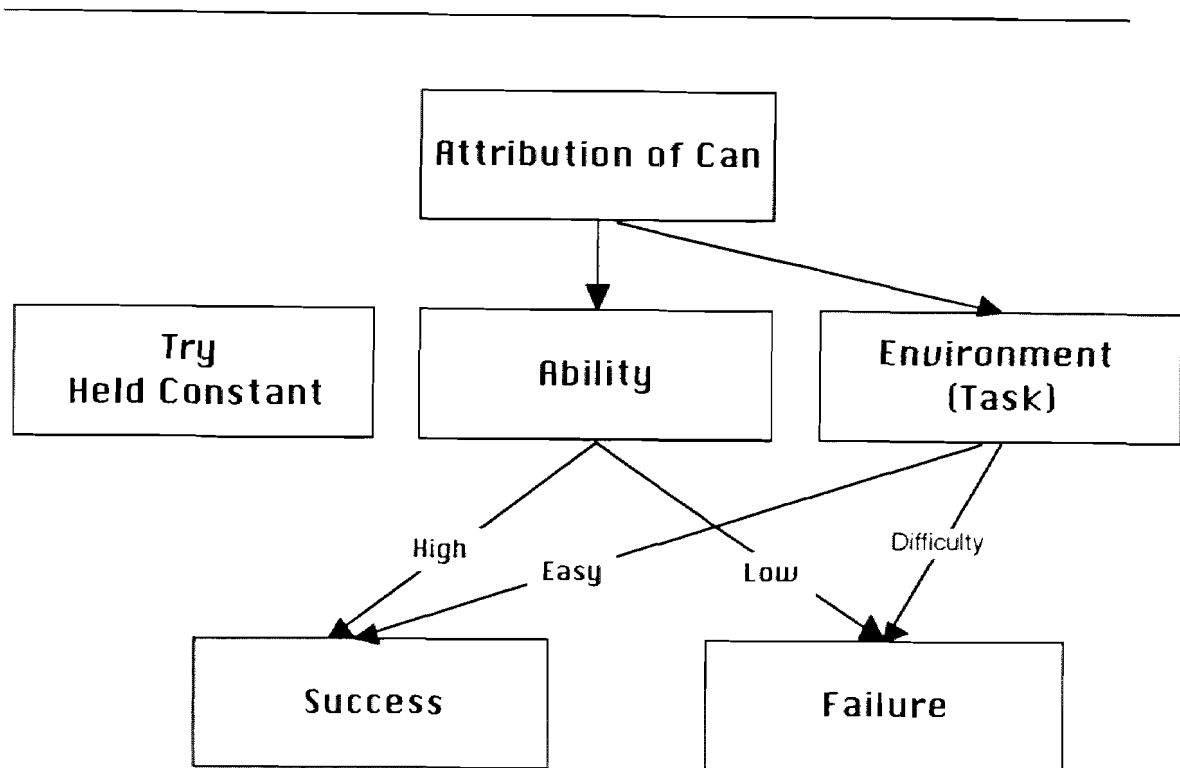


Figure 3. Heider's Attribution of "Can."

perceptions they use to explain their successes and failures (Weiner, 1989).

To better understand attribution theory we will examine the following: Causal Dimensions (internal-external, stable-unstable, controllable-uncontrollable) ; Casual Antecedents, (reasons such as ability, effort, luck, and difficulty of task, that individuals use to assign meaning to their success and failures);

and finally patterns of causality (Learned Helplessness and Mastery Orientation).

Dimensions of Causality

Attribution theory is made of three dimensions of causality: locus of control, stability, and controllability. Each dimension is dichotomous: Locus of control has both an internal and external locus of control; stability has both a stable and unstable characteristic; controllability has both a controllable and uncontrollable characteristic. The reason individuals use to explain the cause of their successes or failures will have one characteristic of each casual dimension.

The first causal dimension, Locus of Control, is composed of attributions to either an "internal locus of control," (personal causality); or an "external locus of control," (environmental causality) (Weiner, 1989; Rotter, 1975; Heider, 1958). The reason individuals use to explain the cause for their successes or failures will either have an internal locus of control or an external locus of control. In other words, they will either believe they personally are the cause of an event or that something in the environment is the cause of an event.

Stability is the second dimension of causality. "Stability" is an event an individual can depend on happening repeatedly; "unstability" is an event an individual sees as a one-time

occurrence (Weiner, 1986; Heider, 1958). The reason individuals use to explain the cause for their successes or failures will either be viewed as stable or unstable. In other words, they will either believe the event will happen again and again, or they will believe this may be the only occurrence for this event.

Controllability is the third dimension of causality. "Controllable" is the feeling of having the power to direct an event; "uncontrollable" is the feeling of not having the power to direct an event (Weiner, 1989; Heider, 1958; Rosenbaum 1972). The reason individuals use to explain the cause for their successes or failures will either be viewed as controllable or uncontrollable. In other words, they will either believe they personally can control the outcome of an event or they personally can not control the outcome of an event.

Causal Antecedents,

Causal Antecedents are reasons that individuals use to explain their successes and failures. The four reasons most often given by individuals to interpret their successes and failures are ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck (Bar-Tal & Darom, 1979; Frieze & Snyder, 1980). A number of other reasons are also used but less frequently, such as mood, fatigue, illness, and other people (Weiner, 1989).

Researchers have found that each reason used to explain success and failures has one characteristic from each of the three dimensions of causality. The placement of a cause within the dimensions of causality depends upon the subjective meaning of that cause to the individual. For example, one may feel one is a lucky person (internal locus of control) or simply a victim of chance (external locus of control) (Weiner, 1989). There is, however, a general agreement among the attribution theorists of the placement of causal antecedents within the dimensions of causality (Gage & Berliner, 1988) (see Table 1).

The first common causal antecedent, ability, is considered to have these causal dimensions: internal locus of control, stable, and not controllable. In other words, ability is an ascription to personal causality, which dependably brings about repeated results, but is out of the control of the individual. An individual cannot chose his or her ability; therefore, the ascription of ability is uncontrollable. However, once an individual understands her or his ability through personal experience (whether that understanding is realistic or not) he or she can depend on this perceived ability to remain constant. Thus, he or she will expect the success or failure, whichever event occurred, to continue (Gage & Berliner, 1988).

The second common causal antecedent, effort, is considered to have these causal dimensions: an internal locus

Table 1

The Four Most Common Reasons Ascribed to Success and Failure and Their Corresponding Dimensions of Causality.

| Causal Antecedents | Causal Dimensions | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-------------------|---------------------|
| | Locus of Control | | Stability | | Controllability | |
| | Internal | External | Stable | Unstable | Control- lable | Uncon- trollable |
| Ability | X | | X | | | X |
| Effort | X | | | X | X | |
| Luck | | X | | X | | X |
| Ease of Task | | X | X | | | X |

of control, unstable, and controllable. In other words, effort is an ascription to personal causality, which is viewed as a one-time event, and is in the control of the individual. An individual can choose his or her level of effort exerted; therefore, effort is controllable. Since the degree of effort exerted is variable and controllable, one cannot depend on repeated results unless identical levels of effort are exerted. Thus, he or she will expect the success or failure, whichever

event occurred, to vary depending on how much effort was exerted (Gage & Berliner, 1988).

The third common causal antecedent, luck, is considered to have these causal dimensions: an external locus of control, unstable, and not controllable. In other words, luck is an ascription to environmental causality, which is viewed as a one-time event, but is out of the control of the individual. One cannot control "lady luck." Therefore, an individual never knows just how a situation will turn out. The outcome is controlled by the environment, which may bring varied results each time (Gage & Berliner, 1988).

The third common causal antecedent, difficulty of task, is considered to have these causal dimensions: an external locus of control, stable, and uncontrollable. In other words, difficulty of task is an ascription to environmental causality, which dependably brings about repeated results, but is out of the control of the individual. One cannot choose how difficult a task will be, but one can depend on the successful completion of an easy task and the unsuccessful completion of a difficult task (Gage & Berliner, 1988).

Patterns of Casual Antecedents

Causal Antecedents are reasons that individuals use to assign meaning to their success and failures. People tend to

assign responsibility for their successes and failures in two common patterns. Pattern one, also called Mastery Oriented and Adaptive Achievement Behavior, is represented by individuals who attribute their successes to effort and ability but attribute their failures to lack of effort. Pattern two, also called Learned Helpless and Maladaptive Achievement Behavior, is represented by individuals who attribute their successes to luck, difficulty of task, and other external reasons, but their failures to low ability (Weiner, 1989; Dweck 1986) (see Figure 4).

Summary of Mastery Oriented Individual (Pattern One)

Mastery Oriented individuals credit themselves for both their successes and failures. They believe their successes are a result of both their ability and sufficient effort. Because ability is an internal locus of control, stable, and uncontrollable, they believe even though they cannot control their ability, once they understand it, they can expect success to continue (Dweck, 1986).

Mastery Oriented individuals believe their failures are a result of insufficient effort. Because effort is an internal locus of control, unstable, and controllable, they believe if they fail, they can choose to try harder next time. Because they believe they have the ability, and because next time they can provide

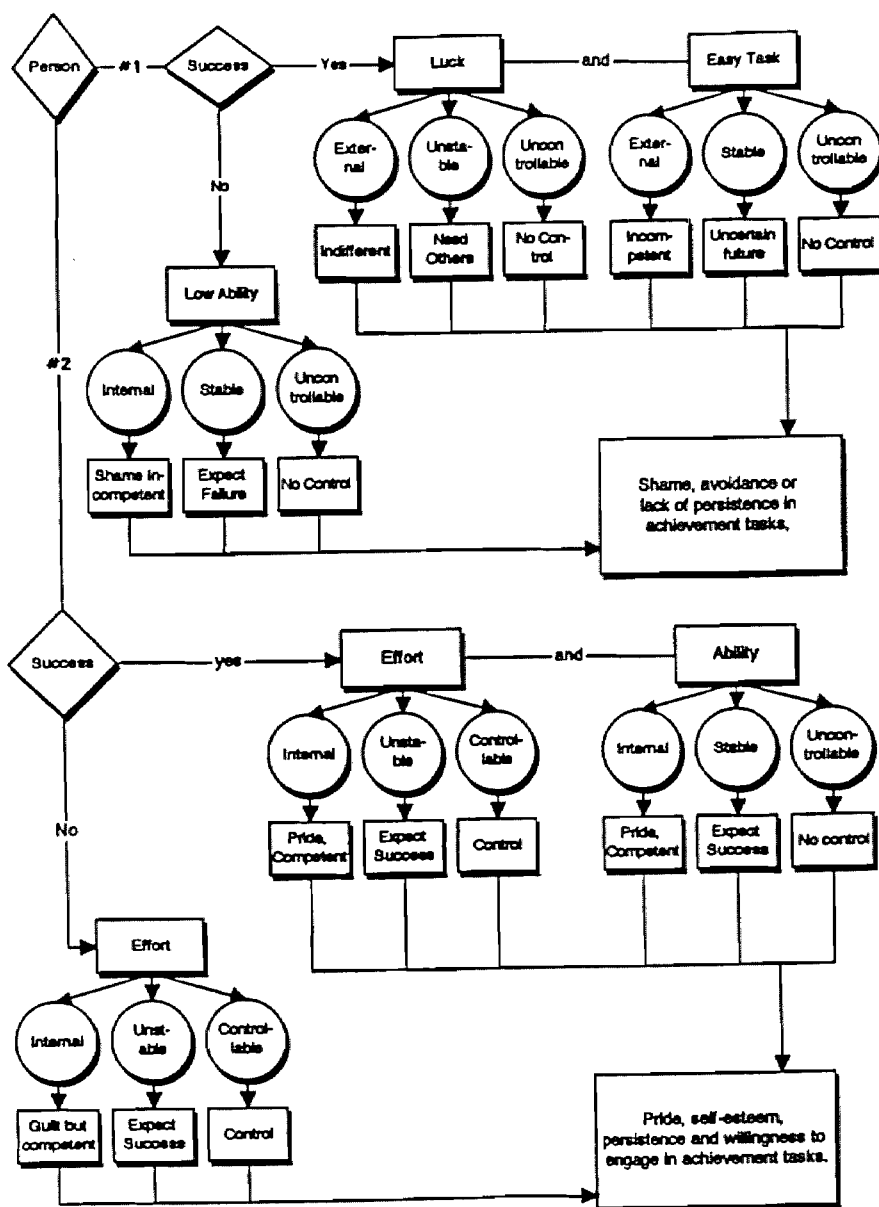


Figure 4. Learned Helpless and Mastery Oriented attributional patterns.

increased effort, they can expect success to return. Because they view effort as unstable and can increase or decrease it at will, they believe outcome will be either successful or unsuccessful, depending on the level of effort they choose to exert (Dweck, 1986).

Since Mastery Oriented individuals believe failure is a result of insufficient effort rather than inability, they do not feel incompetence when they fail. Rather, they feel they just need to try harder. Therefore, both successes and failures lead to pride, self-esteem, and persistence in both success and failure situations and a willingness to try achievement tasks again (Dweck, 1986).

Summary of Learned Helpless Individual (Pattern Two)

Learned Helpless individuals credit themselves for their failures, but credit their successes to an external locus of control, such as luck, an easy task, etc. They do not believe their success are a result of their ability, but rather are a result of external factors that are unstable and uncontrollable. Because they feel they cannot control external factors, they feel helpless to repeat their success. Since they do not credit themselves for their success, they do not experience pride in their accomplishments (Dweck, 1986).

Learned Helpless individuals believe their failures are a result of their inability. Ability is an internal locus of control, stable, and uncontrollable. Because one cannot choose his or her ability, Learned Helpless individuals believe any amount of effort they might exert would not compensate for their inability; so, failure is certain. Thus, they believe outcome is independent from effort (Dweck, 1986).

Since Learned Helpless individuals believe failure is a result of their inability, they feel incompetent when they fail. To avoid or minimize feelings of shame and a sense of failure, they stop trying. If they don't try, they seem to feel they have a justifiable reason for failure, one that is not as personal as inability (Dweck, 1986).

Attribution retraining programs

Attribution theorists (Bar-Tal 1978; deCharms & Shea, 1976; Dweck, 1975; Weiner, 1972; Weiner, Heckhausen, Meyer, & Cook, 1972) believe that the reasons individuals give to explain an event, determine how they will respond to that event. Learned Helpless individuals usually respond to failure by giving up and experiencing feelings of shame. Attribution Theorist hoped to change their responses to persistence and feelings of pride. Therefore, theorists focus retraining program on changing a person's perceived reasons for their successes

and failures from maladaptive perceptions to adaptive ones. These changes would seem to open doors, closed by shame, avoidance, and lack of persistence, to a promising outlook for the future of pride, self-esteem, and a willingness to engage in achievement tasks.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to gain knowledge of the causal factors that bring about a change from a state of Learned Helplessness to a state of Mastery Orientation by studying individuals who have experienced this change. The population researched are adult learners that returned to college as nontraditional students to complete college degrees.

Knowledge of these change factors might better equip educators, therapists, and other professions to facilitate these changes in their students, patients, and others by designing therapeutic and learning activities intended to nurture the change process. The anticipated insight resulting from the study would not be expected to supplant the present classroom and therapeutic methodologies of the educators and therapists, but rather supplement them.

Last, but possibly most important, it could help Learned Helpless individuals face their situations, strategize a change process, and move to a Mastery Oriented position. Once we

understand the change factors in greater detail, the possibilities are improved for using this information to help this segment of the population.

Importance of the Study

Retraining programs to date have focused on testing variables which researchers believed would help individuals change from a state of Learned Helplessness to a state of Mastery Orientation. These treatment interventions were designed by educators and therapist who are experts in the field. Many of the treatment variables tested were found to effectively facilitate a transition from Learned Helpless to Mastery Orientation.

Many time people who have experienced first hand an event or a situation, and have an insider perspective, can help those who do not share this first hand experience gain a deeper understanding simply by sharing their experiences and insights. This same reasoning can be applied to individuals who have made the transition from Learned Helpless to Mastery Oriented, and have done so without the use of intervention strategies. The telling of their transition stories and any commonalties in this transition experience, can provide researchers with an insider's perspective of the transition process. This unique perspective will add to the

body of literature and provide a richer understand of the transition from LH to MO.

The commonalties referred to above, also called patterns, allow the researcher to generalize the findings, with some caution, to the LH to MO population. The patterns also provide a foundation from which to launch further LH to MO transition research.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Much has been written on the subjects of Attribution Theory, Learned Helplessness, and Mastery Orientation. However, relatively little has been written about retraining strategies to facilitate a change from a state of Learned Helplessness to a state of Mastery Orientation.

Discussion of Retraining Studies

A search of the literature found twelve studies (Fowler & Peterson, 1981; Dweck, 1975; Chapin & Dyck, 1976; Relich, Debus, & Walker, 1986; Andrew & Debus, 1978; Supersaxo, Perrez, & Kramis, 1987; Reiher & Dembo, 1984; Allen & Dietrich, 1991; Guskey, Benninga, & Clark, 1983; Wilson & Linville, 1982; Perry & Penner, 1990; Connell & Kimmel, 1982) which tested attributional retraining strategies (see Appendix A for a summary table including author, grade/age of participants, retraining method employed, findings, and biases of each study). Of the twelve studies (referenced above) most of the researchers investigated retraining strategies with elementary school children (first through sixth grades). Fowler and Peterson (1981), Dweck (1975), Chapin and Dyck (1976), Relich, Debus, and Walker (1986), Andrew and Debus (1978),

Supersaxo et al. (1987) studied retraining strategies with fourth through sixth graders; Reiher and Dembo (1984) focused upon junior high students; another (Allen & Dietrich, 1991) emphasized high school age students, while Guskey, Benninga, and Clark (1983), Wilson and Linville (1982), and Perry and Penner (1990) studied college age students, and Connell and Kimmel (1982) studied post-college-age individuals.

The retraining strategies investigated were: (a) reinforcement strategies (involving either verbal reinforcement from others, written reinforcement from others, and/or verbal reinforcement from self); (b) a tangible and exchangeable token element of reinforcement with verbal reinforcement; (c) journalizing and owning success; (d) mastery learning techniques; (e) the number of successful experiences in the face of failure that encouraged persistence; (f) supportive corrective instruction; (g) videotaped testimony of a professor's success, after failure, resulting from ability and effort, and videotaped testimony of a college senior's success, after failure, resulting from effort; both exhorting others experiencing failure to persist.

Successful LH-MO Transition

In nine of the studies, change from a state of Learned Helplessness to a state of Mastery Orientation, (LH-MO), was

reported. Of these nine studies, four did not appear to have threats to internal validity: (a) Fowler and Peterson (1981) tested the effect of teacher positive and attributional feedback, (b) Dweck (1975) tested attributional reinforcement after planned failure situations, (c) Relich et al. (1986) tested modeling of math solutions with attributional retraining and self instruction of math with attributional retraining, (d) Andrews and Debus (1978) tested reinforcement and reinforcement with tokens. In these studies, the lack of threats to internal validity seems to indicate that change occurred as a result of the interventions used.

Five of the nine studies that found a change occurred from LH-MO seemed to have internal threats to validity: (a) Chapin and Dyck (1976) tested attributional retraining; however they did not assess attributional styles prior to treatment and did not control for students in the treatment groups who possibly felt as if they were getting special attention; (b) Supersaxo et al. (1987) tested written attributional feedback from teachers; however, he did not assess attributional styles prior to treatment and did not control for the possible misinterpretation of the student perspective by the teacher; (c) in Reiher and Dembo's (1984) study, students were taught to recognize and self-monitor thoughts; however, one-fourth of the students dropped out of

the study; (d) Allen and Dietrich (1991) tested supporting instruction, such as peer tutoring, additional worksheets, extra help from the teacher; however, attributional styles were not assessed prior to treatment and reliability and validity figures were not reported for the testing instrument used; and lastly (e) Perry and Penner (1990) tested the impact of watching a video testimonial exhorting persistence; however, they did not control for other variables influencing the result. In these studies the presence of threats to internal validity leave the reader with the concern that the reported change might be instead a product of deficient methodology.

Unsuccessful LH-MO Transition

In three of the studies, a change did not appear to occur from LH-MO. One of the three studies did not appear to have threats to internal validity: Guskey et al. (1983) tested mastery learning techniques. In this study the lack of threats to internal validity seem to indicate a change did not occur as a result of the interventions.

Two of the studies did appear to have threats to internal validity: (a) Wilson and Linville (1982) tested a video taped interview as a retraining strategy, and they did not find the video influenced the results. However, maturation of the college student tested and other unidentified and tested

variables may have influenced the results of the study; (b) Connell and Kimmel (1982) tested journalizing and owning success as a retraining strategy; however, a ceiling effect, lack of emphasis of retraining, and individual preferences are variables that may have influenced the results in addition to the treatment variable. In these studies the presence of threats to internal validity seems to raise some question as to whether a change may have occurred that wasn't recognized as a result of the interventions (see Appendix B for a comprehensive discussion of each study that was describe briefly above).

Justification for the Study

The purpose of a Review of the Literature is to report the most current information on a particular topic. From that understanding one can analyze and evaluate the breadth and depth of our knowledge of the topic and can identify areas that need further study.

To determine the sufficiency or insufficiency of the breadth of our knowledge, one looks at the variety of ideas that have been researched, whether the ideas have been tested with different groups of people, such as children, adults, men, women, etc., and one determines whether the ideas have been

tried in different settings, such as classrooms, therapeutic settings, work setting, etc.

An analysis of the current understanding of retraining strategies for adults that bring about a change from Learned Helpless to Mastery Oriented leads to the conclusion that our current knowledge base appears to lack breadth. The evidence from the review of the literature that supports this perspective is (a) There are a limited variety of retraining strategies tried with the Learned Helpless population in general, (b) three distinct retraining strategies have been tried with adults, only one of which brought about an attributional change, (c) Those retraining strategies that have succeeded with children have not been modified and tried with adults, (d) retraining strategies have been designed and applied without apparent strategic input from those who have undergone the transformation from LH-MO. These problems will be elaborated in the paragraphs below.

First, a limited variety of retraining strategies have been tried with the Learned Helpless population. The kinds of retraining strategies reported in the review of the literature included feedback, external reinforcement, mastery learning techniques, successful experiences, testimonies of others, and owning successes. This paucity, alone, gives weight to the

consideration that these may well be but a few of the possible interventions that would bring about an attributional change.

Second, of the limited menu of retraining strategies available to use to bring about attributional changes in the Learned Helpless population, only three different interventions in four separate studies have been tried with the adult population. One study tested mastery learning strategies, two studies tested video taped testimonials exhorting persistence, and a fourth study tested a combination of attributional pattern analysis, journalizing, and owning successes. Only one of the four studies (one of the video taped testimonies) reported that the retraining strategy it used produced an attributional change. Thus, the limited variety argument is particularly cogent if one is concerned with retraining the adult Learned Helpless.

Third, successful retraining strategies used with children have not been tested to see if they might also be successful with adults. It would seem any of the reinforcement strategies that were successful with children, such as self feedback, feedback from others, written feedback, supportive corrective instruction, and successful experiences, might be modified and tested with the adults.

Finally, researchers have not looked at the Learned Helpless problem or the solution to the problem from the

perspective of the Learned Helpless individual. The retraining strategies have been designed from an outsider's perspective. Although many of the strategies have proven effective, this still limits us to an outsider's perspective. The insider perspective could broaden our understanding of the transition process.

It is felt researchers have not exhausted the possibilities of retraining strategies (breadth) nor is it felt that the strategies that have been identified have been tested in a variety of settings across populations (depth). It is the intent of this study to add to the breadth of the understanding of the Learned Helpless to Mastery Oriented change phenomena by looking at this change from the perspective of individuals who have changed from Learned Helpless to Mastery Oriented. If variables are identified which allow the generation of additional strategies, breadth in retraining theory will have been served.

Since the purpose of this project is focused on exploration and discovery of attributional change variables as derived from examination of a participant or insider perspective, the Naturalistic Research Methodology has been chosen. Chapter three provides further detail regarding Naturalistic research, why it was chosen for this project, and a detailed description of the methodology of the study.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of the study is to identify causal factors that bring about a change in an individual from a Learned Helpless attributional orientation to a mastery attributional orientation (LH-MO). The population researched are adult learners that returned to college as non traditional students to complete college degrees.

Choice of Methodology

A researcher must determine which design for organizing the research best answers the questions posed and fits the purpose of the research. The question asked in this study is What are the influences that bring about a change in an individual from a Learned Helpless Attributional Orientation to a Mastery Attributional Orientation?

Currently the understanding of what causes the change from LH to MO as reported in the review of the literature is rich success environments, self-feedback, self-instructional training, mastery learning methods, and external and internal affirmation. Research to date has given us a basic understanding of the change phenomena through conventional

research methodologies. But, as has been argued in the prior chapter, there are grounds for belief that a broader range of causes are yet to be isolated.

In order to explore and/or discover the full breadth of change phenomena, the researcher has chosen to explore the LH-MO change through the recollections of individuals and stakeholders revisiting the experiences that seeded the change from LH to MO. In other words, the researcher is looking at individuals who have changed from a state of Learned Helpless to a state of Mastery Orientation as a consequence of experiences none of which were formally aimed at producing a state of Mastery Orientation.

The naturalistic paradigm is best suited for the kind of inquiry described above, the kind of inquiry that looks at events to construct a theory of causes.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five phases (see Table 2). Phase One: Institutional Permission, Phase Two: Training and Identifying, Phase Three: Orientation, Phase Four: Data Collection, Phase Five: Knowledge Making.

Table 2

Organizational Phases of the Project.

| Phase | Description | Method |
|--|---|--|
| Phase One - Institutional Permission | Obtain permission to contact specific academic advisors and professors | Signed Informed Consent: Institutional |
| Phase Two - Training and Identifying | Contact academic advisor and professors and ask for help in finding research participants | Phone contact |
| | Train academic advisors and professors to identify Learned Helpless and Mastery Oriented students | One to One instruction with LH and MO training materials |
| | Identify potential participants for the research study | Academic advisors and professors identify possible referrals |

| Phase | Description | Method |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| | Academic advisors and professors obtain permission to give potential participant's name and phone number to researcher and give name and phone number to researcher | Signed Release of Information: Participant |
| Phase Three - Orientation | Overview - Attribution Theory with potential participant | Overview Training Materials |
| | Overview potential participant's responsibility | Review Informed Consent: Participant |
| | Potential participant's decision for participation | Signed Informed Consent: Participant |
| | Screen potential participants for research criteria | Autobiography Interview |
| Phase Four - Data Collection | Interview Participant | Interviews Journals |
| | Participant identify other stakeholders | Discussion with researcher |

| Phase | Description | Method |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| | Release of Information from participant | Signed Release of Information from Participant for Other Stakeholders |
| | Stakeholder Release of Information | Signed Release of Information from Potential Stakeholder to Participating Stakeholder |
| | Potential Stakeholder Responsibility | Signed Informed Consent: Stakeholder |
| | Interview Stakeholder | Interviews Journals |
| | Discussion Groups of stakeholders and participants | Signed Informed Consent |
| Phase Five - Knowledge Making | Patterns identified | Transcripts coded Emergent patterns identified |
| | Findings Reported | Chapter Four |

Phase One - Institutional Permission

Permission to Contact Academic Advisors and Professors

The researcher called the academic Deans of four, two and four year midwestern colleges and universities, and described the research project over the phone. The researcher asked permission to contact specific academic advisors and professors that she is acquainted with to solicit their help in identifying individuals to participate in the research project.

It was explained to the Dean that the institution had no responsibility in the research study. The academic advisors and professors identified individuals they felt had changed from LH-MO. The advisors and professors obtained permission from the identified individual to give their name and phone number to the researcher. That was the end of the institution's responsibility. When the Dean gave permission, he/she was asked to sign the Informed Consent: Institutional (see Appendix C)

Phase Two: Training and Identifying

Contact Academic Advisors and Professors

The researcher contacted college professors and academic advisors and solicited their help in identifying individuals they felt had changed from LH-MO.

Train Academic Advisors and Professors

When the academic advisors and professors contacted agree to help, they were trained to recognize individuals who had changed from LH-MO. They were trained in one to one training sessions using training materials provided by the researcher (see Appendix D).

Identify Potential Participants

The academic advisor or professor identified adult students they felt had changed from LH-MO. They used the information they learned during the training session and drew upon their memory and experience with students.

Academic Advisors and Professor: Permission from Potential Participant

Once the academic advisor or professor had someone in mind that met the research criteria, he or she contacted the potential participant and requested permission to give his or her name and phone number to the researcher. If the potential participant agreed to have his or her name passed on, the academic advisor had the individual sign a Release of Information from Potential Participant to Academic Advisor and/or Professor form (see Appendix E).

By signing the Release of Information the potential participant did not agree to participate in the research study; he or she only agreed to have his or her name given to the researcher. Later when the study was explained in detail to the potential participant, he or she had an opportunity to decide if he or she wanted to participate. Once the Release of Information was signed, the form was given to the researcher. The signed form had a space on the bottom for the potential participant's name and phone number.

Phase Three: Orientation

Each potential participant went through an orientation process. The purpose of the orientation process was (a) to explain each participant's responsibility to the study, (b) to determine the potential participant's willingness to participate, (c) to determine if the potential participant met the research criteria.

Overview Potential Participant's Responsibilities

The potential participant's responsibility in the research study was discussed in detail. Each potential participant worked with the researcher individually to insure he or she understood what his or her responsibilities would be if he or she chose to participate. The potential participant's

responsibilities were outlined in the Informed Consent: Research Participants form (see Appendix F). Participant responsibilities included autobiography, interviews, journals, identify other stakeholders, group discussion, and sign Informed Consent.

Autobiography

Each participant was asked to complete a written autobiography of two or three pages or record (a tape recorder was provided by the researcher) a brief, 10 to 15 paragraph, autobiography (see Appendix G, Autobiography Guidelines). It was used to provide information from which to begin the interview process, as one tool to help verify the individual's LH-MO change and became a part of the data for the research project.¹

Interviews

The potential participants were asked to talk with the researcher four times about his or her learning experiences. These sessions took one to two hours each. During the interviews the participant and researcher talked about

¹The participants' and stakeholders' reports of past events are an important part of this research project. It is a resource for the autobiography, interviews, journals, and group discussions. A report of research on retrospective memory and an argument for using it as a resource for this research project is reported in Appendix II.

perceptions of the participant's past and present successful and unsuccessful learning experiences.

Journal

The participant also was asked to keep a journal or diary of his or her thoughts between interviews. He or she either wrote or recorded his or her entries. This journal was for the purpose of recording memories that came to mind during reflective times between interviews. These triggered memories occurred anytime after the interview itself was over. The journalizing process gave the interviewee a chance to record these memories so they could become a part of the data. The journal was given to the researcher at the next interview.

Identification of Other Stakeholders

The participant was asked to identify other people that had knowledge of his or her successful or unsuccessful educational experiences (Stakeholders). It may have been someone like their parents, spouse, academic advisor, or counselor. Once the participant decided who, if anyone, to contact, he or she signed a Release of Information from Participant for Other Stakeholders (see Appendix I) permitting the researcher to contact the potential stakeholder.

Also the participant asked the potential stakeholders if they wished to be contacted by the researcher. If the potential stakeholder agreed, he/she signed a Release of Information from Potential Stakeholder to Participant (see Appendix J) form giving the participant permission to give the potential stakeholder's name and phone number to the researcher. No one was contacted by the researcher without both the permission of the participant and the permission of the potential stakeholder.

The Researcher then contacted the Potential Stakeholder, described his/her responsibilities to the research project, and asked them to sign an Informed Consent: Stakeholder form (see Appendix K).

Group Discussion

The participant was also asked to discuss his or her change experience with other participants who had experienced a like change and/or had watched a like change. During this discussion he or she was asked to share and compare how their experiences were alike and different. Participants were not required to participate in the group experience to participate in the rest of the research project. They also were permitted to delay or withdraw at any time their decision to participate in the group discussion.

Potential Participant's Decision for Participation

Each participant had an opportunity to choose to participate or choose not to participate in the study. If he or she chose to participate, he or she was asked to sign an Informed Consent: Research Participant form (see Appendix F). His or her willingness to participate did not mean he or she was chosen to be a research participant. He or she was screened to ensure he or she met the research criteria. During the screening process, the potential participant completed a brief autobiography and discussed his or her successful and unsuccessful learning experiences with the researcher. These components of the screening process were described in the earlier section entitled Phase Three.

Screen Potential Participant for Research Criteria

After Academic Advisors and Professors initially identified individuals they felt met the research criteria, it was necessary for the researcher to agree that the research criteria had been met. The Research criteria for participants were (a) adult (25 years of age or older), (b) sought after an undergraduate degree, (c) returned to college after having originally been a traditional college student, (d) changed from a

Learned Helpless attributional orientation to a Mastery Orientation.

The researcher determined that the potential participant was once Learned Helpless but is now Mastery Oriented. This was done through the interview process and the autobiography as described above.

Merriam (1988, p.71) describes the interview process as "a person-to-person encounter in which one person elicits information from another." It is a "conversation with a purpose." There are many things that the interviewer cannot observe (e.g., historical happenings, situations that prohibit an observer, how one feels about something, how one organizes their thoughts and feelings around a particular phenomenon). The way to find these answers is not through observation, but through inquiry. Thus, the purpose of the interview is to find out what is on the interviewee's mind (Merriam, 1988).

The interview process with each potential participant began by the researcher reviewing the autobiography the potential participant had prepared. Using this autobiographical foundational information and using the Interview Guidelines (see Appendix L), the researcher asked the potential participant to describe successful past experiences from their memories. When a rapport was established between the potential participant and the researcher, she asked him/her to

also describe unsuccessful past experiences from his/her memories.

Eventually a relationship was built between the potential participant and the researcher, and formal questions and answers were no longer necessary. Through the process of attentive listening, empathetic responding to the potential participant's feelings, and the use of clarification of his or her feelings, a conversation occurred enabling the potential participant to reveal their understanding of their successful and unsuccessful experiences. This served to validate both to the potential participant and the researcher the true nature and meaning of his or her experiences.

The researcher closely watched the potential participant as he or she shared perceptions of the reasons for his or her successful and unsuccessful experiences. She restated what she as the researcher heard the potential participant report verbally as both his/her experiences and feelings. Within each participant's explanation of those occurrences were the clues which would verify the potential participant's learned helplessness, mastery orientation, and the LH to MO transitional process. This information was used to verify each person's appropriateness for participation in the research study, and later, the same information was used to identify

similarities that occurred across participants. These similarities are called patterns in the Naturalistic research paradigm .

Once a person was identified as appropriate for the research project, phase four of the study was begun. Information gathered during the orientation phase became a part of the data gathered during Phase four.

Phase Four: Data Gathering

During phase four of the research study, the interviews with participants were continued. The researcher documented the LH to MO transition reported by the participants. She also verified, when appropriate and possible with participant identified stakeholders, that the documented transition was accurate from their perspective as well. The permission steps were outlined above in the section titled Overview Potential Participant's Responsibilities.

Phase Five: Knowledge Making

Data collection and analysis are a nearly simultaneous activity. Analysis begins with the first interview and continues with each subsequent interview as tentative hypotheses are formed (Merriam, 1988).

Interviews and journals of the participants were transcribed. The researcher frequently read and re-read the

transcript of each interview. As she did so, she interpreted participants' words in terms of possible causation of attributional change. These interpretations were verified and re-verified with the participants and the stakeholders at subsequent interviews to reach consensus on correct interpretation of the participant's experiences.

The interpretations were also discussed in groups of participants and stakeholders. Each group validated, refuted, changed, and created knowledge that was credible to them and that gave meaning to their lives.

Transcripts were coded, and as the patterns emerged, they were reported in Chapter four. In the Naturalistic Research process, at the point where the patterns generated across participants begin to repeat to the point there are no new patterns identified, one has reached what is called redundancy. When redundancy is reached, information gathering is terminated. When no new patterns were forthcoming from the participants' interviews, information gathering was terminated.

Protection of Rights of Participants

The protection of rights in this study extended beyond that of the participants. Because the researcher solicited help from academic advisors and professors of midwestern two and

four year colleges and universities to identify potential participants, the rights of the colleges and universities and the academic advisors and professors needed to be protected. Also since participants identified other stakeholders, the rights of the participants and the other stakeholders also needed to be protected.

A series of Releases of Information and Informed Consent forms were designed to protect all those involved in the study (see Appendix M: Protection of the Rights of Research Participants). A Release of Information was used when an individual was only asked permission to give a name and phone number to the researcher. An Informed Consent was used when an individual or institution was asked to participate in the research study and, therefore, needed to understand what their full responsibilities would be to the study.

Number of Participants

In Quantitative studies, decisions are made to use accessible samples and to use the appropriate number of subjects to provide statistical power and yet be manageable. In Naturalistic studies, decisions are also made to provide an appropriate number of participants to render meaningful information and yet remain manageable because of the volume of information that is generated from interviews.

The criteria for making the decision regarding what is the appropriate numbers of participants is when redundant patterns across participants occurs. In this study six participants was sufficient to reach redundancy.

Summary

The purpose of this research project was to identify causal factors that bring about a change in an individual from a Learned Helpless attributional orientation to a Mastery attributional orientation. This will be accomplished by looking at the LH-MO change process through the lives of individuals who lived this process. The methodology chosen was one that facilitated discovery and exploration, Naturalistic research. The findings of this project were presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this research study is to identify causal factors that helped individuals transition from a state of Learned Helplessness to a state of Mastery Orientation. The data was gathered in the form of interviews. Six very different individuals participated in the study. Each came from a different background, had a different life experience, and was currently pursuing different interests. The one thing they all had in common is they were once Learned Helpless and are now Mastery Oriented.

Organization for Reporting of the Data and Findings

This chapter is organized into five sections: Introduction, Organization for Reporting of the Data, Overview of the Participants, Reporting of the Data, Findings, and Summary.

This section, Organization for Reporting of the Data, explains how the information gathered through the life-story of the six participants is presented.

Participant's Life-story

Each participant in the study is introduced to the reader. His or her brief life-story is presented so the reader may

become acquainted with each individual who participated in the study. It will help the reader understand each participant from a Learned Helpless and Mastery Oriented, insiders' and researcher's perspective.

Verification of Prior Learned Helplessness

The researcher in this study has carefully verified each participant's past Learned Helplessness. Unless it is determined with certainty that the participants in the study were correctly identified as Learned Helpless, the findings will be meaningless.

To verify the participants' past Learned Helplessness, the researcher looked for evidence, demonstrated consistently through the participant's beliefs and behaviors, that they believed their failures were a result of their inability, routinely felt situations were out of their control, and believed that outcome and effort were independent. She looked for signs that they gave up in the face of failure, felt shame and humiliation surrounding both their successes and failures, and exhibited avoidance behaviors in both success and failure situations.

To methodically analyze the Learned Helpless evidence for each participant, the definition of Learned Helplessness was divided into four categories: Perception of Successes and

Failures, Perception of Control, Perceptions of Positive Outcome and Effort Independence, and Responses to Successes and Failures.

The first category, Perception of Successes and Failures, demonstrates how he or she perceived his or her ability in success and failure situations. Learned Helpless individuals believe their failures are a result of their inability which is an internal focus, and believe their successes are a result of good luck, the ease of the task, etc., which is an external focus.

The Second category, Perception of Control, demonstrates how the participant perceived the control he or she personally had over situations in his or her life. Learned Helpless individuals feel situations in their life are out of their control. Sometimes even the simplest choices seem to be externally determined and personal choice is out of the question.

The third category, Perceptions of Positive Outcome and Effort Independence, demonstrates how the participant perceived the relationship between outcome and effort. A Learned Helpless individual believes outcome is independent of effort. The link between success and hard work is missing.

The fourth category, Responses to Successes and Failures, demonstrates the participant response to his or her successes and failures. Learned Helpless individuals feel shame when they fail because they are humiliated by what they perceive

as lack of ability. They also feel shame when successful because they perceive success as a result of external forces rather than a personal contribution through their ability. To protect themselves from the pain of shame, they will avoid situations, will build protective walls around their emotions, will quit trying or exert very little effort, and may be unwilling to try achievement tasks again.

To verify each individual's past Learned Helplessness, one cannot use one incident or only a small portion of a person's life. Learned Helplessness is a perception individuals hold regarding their successes and failures that is pervasive in their life perceptions. Therefore, one must examine the individual's life as a whole; and from their life-story, cull evidence that consistently, accurately, and convincingly demonstrates their Learned Helpless state.

As the participant's life-story unfolded and behavior and belief evidence surfaced, the researcher and participants together analyzed, assigned meaning to, and drew conclusions from the evidence. Therefore, in this paper, when the participant's behaviors or beliefs are referenced or analyzed, or when illustrations are offered to demonstrate Learned Helplessness, they were not constructed independently by either the researcher or the participant. Instead they are

mutually constructed interpretations and understandings of the participant's perceptions.

Verification of Each Participant's Current Mastery Orientation

The researcher has also carefully verified each participant's current Mastery Orientation. Since the purpose of this research project is to study the Learned Helpless to Mastery Oriented transition process, it is critical to correctly determine that the participants in the study have made the transition from Learned Helplessness to Mastery Orientation. Unless this is established, the findings will be meaningless.

The researcher looked for evidence, demonstrated consistently through the participants' beliefs and behaviors, that they believed their successes are the result of their ability and sufficient effort, and that their failures are a result of insufficient effort. She looked for signs that they persisted even in the face of failure, believed that outcome and effort are mutually dependent, and routinely felt situations were within their control. She also looked for evidence of feelings of pride resulting from success, and guilt, but not shame, resulting from failure.

To facilitate processing the Mastery Oriented evidence and link it to the participant's life-story, the definition of Mastery Oriented has been divided into four categories:

Perception of Successes and Failures, Perception of Control, Perceptions of Outcome and Effort Dependence, and Responses to Successes and Failures.

The first category, Perception of Successes and Failures, is evidence of how the participant perceived his or her ability in success and failure situation. Mastery Oriented individuals believe their failures are a result of a lack of effort, not a lack of ability. Therefore if they try harder, next time they will succeed. They believe they are successful because they have worked hard and have ability.

In the Second category, Perception of Control, are the participants' perceptions of the control they feel they have over situations in their lives. Mastery Oriented individuals believe they make things happen by making wise choices and working hard.

The third category, Perceptions of Outcome and Effort Dependence, is evidence of how the participant perceived the relationship between outcome and effort. Mastery Oriented individuals believe outcome is dependent on effort. They think a link exists between working hard and being successful.

The fourth category, Responses to Successes and Failures, is evidence of how the participants respond to their successes and failures. Mastery Oriented individuals experience pride when successful because they perceive their successes are a

result of their ability and hard work. They experience guilt in failure situations, but they do not experience overwhelming shame, because they feel they have the ability and control to correct the situation by trying harder next time. Because they have an internal locus of control they are willing to try achievement tasks again.

To verify each individual's current Mastery Orientation, again, one must consider the individual's life as a whole; and from his or her life-story, cull evidence that consistently, accurately, and convincingly demonstrates their Mastery Orientation.

As the participant's life-story unfolded and behavior and belief evidence surfaced, the researcher and participants together analyzed, assigned meaning to, and drew conclusions from, the evidence. Joint constructions are quite important to assure that the understanding created is not a product of the researcher's perceptions of the participant's behaviors and beliefs. Therefore, the researcher feels it is important to reiterate that when the participant's behaviors or beliefs are referenced or analyzed, or when illustrations are offered to demonstrate Mastery Orientation, they were not constructed independently by either the researcher or the participant. Instead they are mutually constructed interpretations and understandings of the participant's perceptions.

The next section, Overview of the Participants, presents general descriptive information of the six individuals that participated in the study. This section will give the reader a conceptual picture of the diversity of the participants.

Overview of the Participants

Descriptive information of the individuals who participated in the study is presented in this section. The individuals were referred to the researcher by academic advisors and professors from several midwestern two- and four-year, public and private colleges and universities. After each referred individual was screened for past Learned Helplessness and present Mastery Orientation, six individuals met the research criteria and participated in the study.

One individual willing to participate in the study was not included since both the researcher and the individual decided she had not made the transition to a state of Mastery Orientation. The referring professor and the researcher correctly identified this individual as exhibiting Learned Helpless behaviors and beliefs in the past. They also speculated that because of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) status she holds in her profession, her 4.0 grade-point average in college, her successful marriage and family, and because of what appeared to be her perceptions of these successful

endeavors, that she had made the transition to a state of Mastery Orientation.

During the screening phase of this study, it became evident that this individual had not made the transition to Mastery Oriented. She did not demonstrate behaviors of persistence, or a belief that she had the ability to succeed. She has received many prestigious awards in her profession and did not credit her ability for these successes or exhibit feelings of pride for these achievements. She attributed her successes to external factors, such as her husband, her colleagues, or luck; and she attributed her failures to her inability. She did not believe she was in control of situations in her life. The researcher and individual together analyzed her beliefs and behaviors and concluded that she had not made the transition to Mastery Oriented. Therefore, she was not included in this study.

Of the six participants, there are four males and two females. Their ages are 26, 26, 38, 39, 39, and 40. Each participant has returned to college to complete a bachelors degree after dropping out as a traditional student. Five of the participants are married; one is single. Five have children; one does not. Three of the participants were raised within functional families; three were raised within dysfunctional

Table 3

Description of Participants.

| Name | AGE | F/M | M/S | Child -ren | Employment | Family | Abused |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|---------------|-------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Jason | 26 | M | M | Three | Home Appraiser | F | No |
| Paula | 26 | F | S | One | Secretary | D | Yes |
| Jane | 40 | F | M | Two | Student | F | No |
| Larry | 39 | M | M | One | Teacher & coach | D | Yes |
| Doug | 38 | M | M | One | Student & Grocery Clerk | F | Yes |
| Ted | 39 | M | M | Zero | Owner Security Agency | D | Yes |

F/M: F=Female, M=Male

M/S: M=Married, S=Single

Family: F=Functional, D=Dysfunctional

families. Four of the participants were abused as children, two were not abused. Their professions are secretary, student and homemaker, student and grocery clerk, teacher and coach, home appraiser, and owner of a security agency (see Table 3).

Reporting of the DataJason's Life-story

Jason is 26 years old, married, and has three children: a son five, and two daughters, three and one. Jason was born and raised in a large mid-western city. He has one older sister.

Jason was reared in a loving home where his parents and extended family wanted the best for him. They took family vacations together and had regular quality family time.

Jason attended a private grade school with rigorous entrance requirements. He indicated that he "hated school." He said, "I didn't seem to fit in anywhere. I was overweight, and that didn't help." His grades were good; he didn't feel successful. He always felt like he "was running to catch up," and that, "I just made it by the skin of my teeth." He said he and his peers compared grades and his were never the best. Therefore, he always felt that the other kids were smarter than he was.

Jason went to a public high school where his grades continued to be good. He graduated in the top one-third of the class and got a 26 on his American College Testing (ACT) Examination. He liked math and industrial technical classes, but disliked all other subjects. He indicated that he was regularly criticized by his teachers. He felt like there was no reason to try when his best efforts gained only criticism. He exerted minimum effort in high school; and yet he processed enough information to score well on his college entrance exams and placed high in his graduating class.

Jason went to college directly from high school. He felt it was expected and that he didn't have other options. His college

choice was made by his paternal grandmother who was paying his tuition. He was quite homesick his freshman year and didn't like being 600 miles away from home. Jason acted out his homesickness by breaking the minor school rules, not getting into real trouble, but being an irritant to school officials.

Jason indicated, he "never" studied his freshman year. He did write the required research papers, but met only minimal requirements. His grades were "D's" and "C's," but he indicated they should have all been "F's." He did, however, go to class. He indicated freshman class attendance was closely monitored. He was willing to break other rules because he was rebellious, but not the class attendance rule because that would have gotten him "into major trouble."

After his freshman year, his parents decided it would be better if he returned home. They felt his academic performance was not good enough to justify a second year of out-of-state tuition. They decided he would instead attend a community college near home. He did very well academically, but attributed his success to a less rigorous academic environment. However, he was close to his friends and family, which solved his homesickness problem.

His junior years he again went away to college, but this time only ninety miles. However, he was attending a school he considered to be academically rigorous. When he felt he was

having academic problems (although in reality his grades were average) he dropped out, choosing to work in a meat-packing plant. His job involved moving heavy hogs at boiling temperatures. The heat burned through his protective gloves and occasionally he received light duty until the blisters healed.

Jason's shift was from 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. When he and his friends got off work, they would race to their cars and on to a convenience store where they would buy beer. Then they would drink until they passed out and sleep until time to return to work.

During Jason's junior year of college he had met the girl who later became his wife. Jason doesn't understand why she stayed with him during his "drinking days," but she did. She also became pregnant and decided to have the baby. Both Jason's and Lauree's parents insisted their children marry.

The newlyweds lived with Lauree's parents until Jason got a full time job, and then they moved into a small apartment. Jason indicated that he felt a sense of responsibility to his wife and new son which motivated him to pursue a professional career. He accepted a position as a house appraiser. It provided well for his family, was challenging, and allowed for diverse activities. Because the new job required a bachelors degree, Jason returned to college and is earning "A's"

and "B's," He should finish his bachelor's degree in about a year.

Jason recently changed jobs. The company he worked for closed because of legal problems. Jason did not let this unfortunate turn of events discourage him. He located a similar job in another state, sold his house, and moved his family in just a few weeks. He and the family are doing well in the new location.

Jason's Verification of Past Learned Helplessness

The following section provides a summary that demonstrates that Jason was learned helpless in the past. (see Appendix N for an in-depth analysis that demonstrates his past Learned Helplessness.)

Perception of Successes and Failures

Jason believed he did not have the ability to succeed. He consistently demonstrated by his perceptions about his life experiences that he believed he failed because he lacked ability and succeeded because of external factors. He initially formed this opinion in elementary school feeling he "just made it by the skin of my teeth."

He continued to feel he lacked ability throughout his high school years in spite of the fact that he graduated in the top

third of his class and earned a score of twenty six on his ACT college entrance exam. He continued to believe he lack ability through out his college experience using a poor freshman year as proof in spite of successful sophomore and junior years.

Perception of Control

Jason routinely believed he did not have control over the choices in his life. In reality his parents and grandparents made many of his choices, and he didn't think he could assert his personal wishes. His parents chose his career path; his grandmother chose his college his freshman year; his parents made the decision he would attend a community college his sophomore year and a four year university his junior year.

Perceptions of Positive Outcome and Effort Independence

Jason viewed outcome and effort as independent of each other. He believed his best effort in elementary school produced inferior scores in comparison to his peers. He also believed his best efforts in high school produced teacher criticism.

Jason's perceived lack of success, in spite of his perceived best effort, seemed to discourage a belief in a link between effort and outcome. His best efforts produced criticism and

imperfect scores; thus, he reasoned, effort did not produce success.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Jason's response to his failures was to quit trying and to feel humiliated that he failed. He felt humiliation because he felt he lacked the ability to succeed. To minimize the pain of humiliation, he quit trying. He said, "I just got tired of it [failing]. I just did enough to get by; then I didn't have to deal with it." After Jason's junior year of college, he gave up and dropped out. He describe feeling like a "complete failure."

Summary of Jason's Learned Helplessness

Jason consistently demonstrated in the telling of his life-story that he believed he lacked the ability to succeed, that he believed he did not have control over his life, and that he did not see a relationship between outcome and effort. To avoid feelings of humiliation and shame after failing, he simple quit trying. This demonstrates that Jason was Learned Helpless in the past. His Learned Helpless state continued until approximately his early twenties.

Jason's Verification of Current Mastery Orientation

The following section provides a summary that demonstrates that Jason is currently Mastery Oriented. (see Appendix N for an in-depth analysis that demonstrates his current Mastery Orientation.)

Jason began to make the transition in his early twenties when he began to believe in and trust his ability. As a result of his new perception of himself, he began to recognize that he had options and that he had control over the choices he made. He also began to recognize that he was experiencing success as a result of his personal effort. He began to believe he had the ability to succeed. When he consistently was able to trust his ability, take control of his life, recognize the relationship between outcome and effort, and persist even in difficult situations, the transition to Mastery Orientation was complete. He is only twenty-six now and does not have years of evidence, but his new perception of his successes and failures is clearly Mastery Oriented.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Jason has a new perception of his abilities. As he looked back to his high school days, he realized that his perception of his abilities was irrational and that he did very well. He also recognizes his college experience as successful. Although he is

not proud of his grade point average, because he feels it could have been better, he no longer discounts completely his accomplishment.

Jason currently believes he is successful. He indicates he has a successful professional career, his marriage is a success, his children are doing well, and he will soon complete his bachelors degree.

Perception of Control

Jason spent the first twenty years of his life viewing his life circumstances as out of his control. He currently perceives that he has control over his personal, professional, and academic circumstances. He has made wise personal choices regarding his career choice, changing employment, maintaining a health family relationship, and continuing college. Also, he now recognizes that he did have control in the past but chose not to exercise this control.

Perceptions of Outcome and Effort Dependence

Jason now views outcome and effort as mutually dependent. He reminisced about his high school and college grades and remarked, "As I think about it, if I hadn't just quit trying, I probably could have done well." Jason also recognizes his successful family relationships, his success academically,

and his successful career are all outcomes resulting from his personal effort.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Jason is feeling confident in his abilities and demonstrates his confidence by not quitting in the face of difficult situations. Jason recently lost his job, but maintained his Mastery Oriented perspective and persisted finding a new job, moving his family, and continuing his college studies;.

Summary of Jason's Verification of Mastery Orientation

Jason consistently demonstrated in the telling of his current life-story that he is confident in his abilities. He feels proud of his success in his career, his success in his marriage, and his success in his college studies. He has taken control of his life and is making wise choices for himself. He recognizes that it is through his hard work that he is successful and continues to work toward his life's goals even in difficult times. This demonstrates that Jason is currently Mastery Oriented.

Paula's Life-story

Paula grew up in a home with two parents and four children, two boys and two girls. She was the third child. They

were a practicing Catholic family, and she still has a strong faith.

Paula's mother stayed at home to rear the children. She is what Paula called, "the glue in the family." By this she means that she kept the family together and functioning during times when her alcoholic father would physically abuse her mother and emotionally abuse the children. Consequently, Paula's childhood was one of constant emotional turmoil.

Paula recalls that in first grade she spent two months out of school recuperating from the disease Mononucleosis. From then on she felt as if she were struggling academically. She was required to repeat second grade and was embarrassed saying, "I really felt like a failure, so I gave up easily. I just always remember feeling like just kind of dumb and not feeling very good about myself because everyone knew I got held back." She indicated after that experience she "disliked" school, but loved to be with her friends.

Paula's parents fought continuously. The children were drawn into their fights. Often Paula spent her evenings and weekends in her room worrying. She woke up during the night hearing her parents fighting and could not go back to sleep. This worry and lack of sleep caused her to day-dream in school. So, what was already a difficult educational experience

became even worse for her. She was unable to focus in class and had very little interest in academics.

Her parents divorced when she was in junior high and she turned to her friends for attention and consolation. She began to drink and use drug with these friends, and at the age of fourteen, she spent two months in a drug abuse treatment center. Here she made close friendships with other kids experiencing the same problems. After her release, she remained chemical-free for several years.

Paula went to a private high school, where she continued to struggle academically. One of the high school counselors befriended her and became an important person in her life. As a senior Paula was one credit short of meeting high school graduation requirements. Her counselor made it possible for her to participate in graduation ceremonies and finish her last credit over the summer at a community college. Even though she was grateful to participate with her friends in graduation ceremonies, she felt she had not earn her graduation privileges.

After graduation, Paula moved out of her house, lived in a one room apartment, used public transportation to get to work, and worked toward finishing her high school diploma. Her high school counselor picked her up every Saturday morning, sometimes insisting she get out of bed, to take her to her Saturday high school completion class. She believes she

would not have completed her graduation requirements without his help.

When Paula was nineteen she became pregnant. This was her second pregnancy in that year, the first she ended by abortion. Because she was living independently and struggling financially, she needed to make other arrangements during her pregnancy. Through Catholic Social Services she was placed in a family home with a single mother of three. The two women became very close friends. This home was very different from Paula's because there was no fighting. Paula says, "I was focused. I could think." She worked part-time and went to college part-time. Paula indicates she earned the best grades of her life. In her room in the evenings, she could study no longer preoccupied with family problems. She received the first "B" in her life and was very proud.

After she gave birth, Paula and the baby moved back home to live with her mother. She worked part-time and went to a community college part-time. She did very well in school. She and her mother agreed after two years it was time for Paula to move out and become independent. She had a very difficult time finding affordable and appropriate housing. She heard from a friend at her daughter's day care center of a low-rent apartment complex under construction in a nearby suburb. She went to the construction site, obtained the name

and phone number of a contact person, and put her name on the occupancy list. She was the first one to move in and continues to live there.

In February of this year, Paula's mother died of a brain tumor. She was diagnosed only a few months before her death. Paula and her mother were very close. Paula respected her mother for the way she always took care of the kids in spite of difficult situations with her dad. She also respected her for the strength she demonstrated when eventually she divorced her husband and began to live independently. She had been depending on her financially to buy her daughter clothes, baby sitting, etc. Her death left a huge void in Paula's life.

Paula was recently working in the education department for a major insurance company. She was terminated from that job in the past few weeks for being habitually late. She has taken this opportunity to pursue her nursing interests full time and is working part time through a temporary employment agency.

Paula's Verification of Past Learned Helplessness

The following section provides a summary that demonstrates that Paula was learned helpless in the past. (see Appendix N for an in-depth analysis that demonstrates her past Learned Helplessness.)

Perception of Successes and Failures

Paula felt she did not have the ability to succeed personally or academically. She had not been confident of her academic ability since first grade when she fell behind after a eventually resulting in repeating second grade. She felt humiliated, saying, "I just always remember feeling like just kind of dumb and not feeling very good about myself because everyone knew I got held back." She continued to struggle through school eventually participating in high school graduation ceremonies one credit short finishing the following summer.

She also felt she was a personal failure because she was part of a dysfunctional family, because of her chemical dependency problems, and because of a decision she made to have an abortion. These perceived failures were confirmation to Paula that she did not have the ability to succeed personally.

Perception of Control

Paula routinely felt she did not have control over the her life. One example is she felt trapped in a dysfunctional family. Her physical needs were met, but her emotional needs were not met. Paula felt she had no choices. She indicated her mother had told her that in spite of her home situation that she

could make appropriate choice. However, Paula indicated she did not see this as an option. She said "I'm not trying to put the blame anywhere, but it's your house; it's where you live. You have nowhere to go. I didn't pick that situation; I didn't pick my parents. They gave birth to me; that's where I'm at. That's my life."

Perceptions of Positive Outcome and Effort Independence

Paula viewed outcome and effort as independent of each other. She was preoccupied with her family situation, and it took all her effort just to survive emotionally. She was drained of strength and thus was unable to exert much effort in achievement situations. Because she never intentionally tried to achieve, she did not associate effort with success. She said, "I just thought it [failure] was expected. I didn't expect anymore or any less."

Responses to Successes and Failures

Paula responded to failure situations in her life by giving up. Because she did not see a relationship between outcome and effort, she did not intentionally try to achieve academically for many years. She felt embarrassment and shame, embarrassed to be retained in second grade and for failing academically throughout her life. She also felt shame when

hospitalized for chemical dependence and for a decision she made to have an abortion.

Summary of Paula's Learned Helplessness

Paula consistently demonstrated in the telling of her life-story that she believed she lacked the ability to succeed academically or personally. She believed she could not change her ability or gain control over her family situation. Since she did not see a relationship between outcome and effort, she did not feel that anything she did would correct the situation. To avoid feelings of humiliation and shame after failing, she simply quit trying. This demonstrates that Paula was Learned Helpless in the past. This continued until approximately her early twenties.

Paula's Verification of Current Mastery Orientation

The following section provides a summary that demonstrates that Paula is currently Mastery Oriented. (see Appendix N for an in-depth analysis that demonstrates his current Mastery Orientation.)

Paula began to make the transition to Mastery Oriented in her early twenties when she began to believe in and trust her ability. As a result of her new perception of herself, when she was freed from family turmoil, she could realistically view

her ability. She also gave birth to her daughter and was responsibly providing for her. She began to focus on her studies, to work hard, and to succeed. This gave her evidence that she had ability, and that effort and outcome were mutually dependent. When she consistently was able to trust her ability, to take control of her life, to recognize the relationship between outcome and effort, and to persist even in difficult situations, the transition to Mastery Orientation was complete. Even though she is just 26 and does not have years of experiences to use as illustrations of her new perceptions, her new perceptions clearly demonstrate that she is Mastery Oriented.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Paula gained a new perception of her abilities during her pregnancy while living with a caring adult role model. She experienced and recognized her success personally, on the job, and academically while living in a safe and comfortable environment with structure and guidance.

She continued her success after her baby was born. She continued in college; she continued to work; she continued to care for her child. Her attitudes about her ability have become consistently positive.

Perception of Control

Paula began to take control of her life at about the age of eighteen or nineteen. She now recognizes that she did have choices in the past saying, "I thought I had no choices; now I realize I made choices and the wrong ones." She also recognizes that she made wise choices to continue her pregnancy and rear her child, to continue her college education part-time, and to support herself and her child through full-time employment.

Perceptions of Outcome and Effort Dependence

Paula now views outcome and effort as mutually dependent. Paula began to see that if she worked hard, the outcome was usually successful. She recognizes that through her hard work, she is getting the best grades in her life, is successful on the job, is responsibly caring for her daughter, and is happy.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Paula is feeling confident in her abilities and is demonstrating her confidence by persevering in the face of difficult situations. She no longer gives up when adversity occurs but rather analyzes the situation and then takes appropriate steps to make positive change.

Summary of Paula's Verification of Mastery Orientation

Paula consistently demonstrates in the telling of her current life-story that she is confident in her abilities. She feels proud of her personal and academic successes, and particularly proud of her success as a mother. She has taken control of her life and is making wise choices for herself. She recognizes that it is through her own hard work that she is successful and continues to work toward completing an Associates of Arts Degree. This demonstrates that Paula is currently Mastery Oriented.

Jane's Life-story

Jane is 40, married, with two children. She was born and reared in New York City. Jane has older identical twin sisters. She felt her parents had expected her to be either a twin or a son. Because she was neither, she felt like an inadequate family member. She viewed her sisters as perfect, seeing herself in competition with them to achieve the same status. As identical twins, they received a lot of positive attention from parents, teachers, and others, attention that Jane did not receive and could not compete to receive. They were excellent students and both graduated from college with teaching degrees.

Jane did not view her grammar school experiences positively indicating she, "always felt dumb." She received average grades but viewed them as inadequate because her sister always received above average grades. She felt humiliated during recitation, and manipulated situations to avoid verbal reading or other activities that might bring criticism or ridicule.

In high school her closest friends were excellent students, taking advanced placement classes. Because of the contrast between her perception of them and her perception of herself, she continued to feel academically inadequate.

Jane graduated from high school and attended one semester of college in New York City. She dropped out, stating she "flunked out." In reality, she passed three classes and failed only one class. She viewed her decision to drop out as the only option she had at the time.

After dropping out of college, Jane went to work for Macy's Department Store and moved into an apartment with a girl friend. She left Macy's to accept her first career secretarial position. Because of poor job attendance, she was fired from this job. Initially she blamed this on lack of ability, but subsequently realized this was misplaced blame and that she needed to attend work regularly.

Jane met her husband through friends. He was from Iowa, and after they were married, they moved back to his home state. They have two children, a girl, 13, and a boy, 7. She loves her role as wife and mother. They have a good marriage, and she says her husband is her best friend. Her husband indicates that he was surprised by Jane's insecurities because he has always seen her as someone who could do anything. He said when their group of friends were "hanging out together," and they all wanted to do something, she was always the one who took control of the situation to make the reservation or get the tickets, etc.

As she matured, she began to realize that her sisters experienced the same uncertainties and fears as she did growing up. This has helped her not only view the past differently, but has given her a more realistic view of the present. She indicates that in adulthood she and her sisters face many of the same problems.

Jane decided to go back to college last year and is working toward an Associates of Arts degree. She is attending a community college and has a close friendship with an instructor in the learning center. This friendship has helped Jane realize that she has untapped academic potential. She is doing very well in college and expects to graduate in a year.

Jane's Verification of Past Learned Helplessness

The following section provides a summary that demonstrates that Jane was learned helpless in the past. (see Appendix N for an in-depth analysis of her past Learned Helplessness.)

Perception of Successes and Failures

Jane felt she didn't have the ability to succeed. She saw herself as a failure as a family member because she was not a twin or a boy, she felt she was a failure academically because she received lower grades than her sisters, and she felt she was a failure professionally because she was fired from her first job.

Perception of Control

Jane felt she did not have control over her life. The most prominent roles Jane played while growing up were those of child and student. She felt helpless to play either of these roles adequately. She could not be the twin or the son her parents expected, and she could not be the quality of student she expected herself to be.

Perceptions of Positive Outcome and Effort Independence

Jane viewed outcome and effort as independent of each other. When asked if she ever worked for a grade of "A" or "B" she said, "What for? I couldn't have done it." Convinced that she didn't have the ability to do well academically, she saw no value in trying. When she was fired from her first professional secretarial job for poor job attendance, she reasoned the termination was for lack of ability. She did not see the relationship between attendance and continued employment.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Jane's response to her failure was to quit trying. She also felt shame because she believed she lacked ability. When Jane had to recite in school, she viewed her performance as so poor that she experienced humiliation. She felt she didn't have the ability to do better, nor did she feel extra effort would produce better results. She said, "I thought I could never get better [grades] than I did, so I just didn't bother to try." She learned to get by through minimal effort. She said, "I figured out by then that I could stay out of trouble if I kept my mouth shut and handed in my homework. So I did. That's all I did."

Summary of Jane's Learned Helplessness

Jane consistently demonstrated in the telling of her life-story that she believed she lacked the ability to succeed academically or personally. She felt she could not change her ability or change herself in order to fit into her family of origin. Since she did not see a relationship between outcome and effort, she felt there was nothing she could do to correct the situation. Therefore, she gave up in the face of failure. This demonstrates that Jane was Learned Helpless in the past. Her Learned Helpless state continued until approximately her early thirties.

Jane's Verification of Current Mastery Orientation

The following section provides a summary that demonstrates that Jane is currently Mastery Oriented. (see Appendix N for an in-depth analysis of her current Mastery Orientation.)

Jane began to make the transition in her early thirties when she began to believe in and trust her ability. As a result of her new perception of herself, she began to look at some of her old belief systems differently. She began to acknowledge the past successes she had ignored and began to believe in her ability. When she was consistently able to trust her ability, take control of her life, recognize the relationship between

outcome and effort, and persist even in difficult situations, the transition to Mastery Orientation was complete.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Jane has a new perception of her abilities. As she reviewed her feelings regarding her ability, she indicates that she is now a competent and capable woman and was probably a competent and capable child and young adult as well, but at the time she "just didn't recognize it." Her relationship with her sisters is now mature and placed in the appropriate perspective. She also views her academic success realistically basing her perception on performance and knowledge rather than feelings of inability.

Perception of Control

Jane spent the first thirty years of her life believing her life circumstances were out of her control. She currently feels she has control over her personal and academic circumstances.

Perceptions of Outcome and Effort Dependence

Jane now views outcome and effort as mutually dependent. This is evidenced by her new attitude toward effort and outcome in her past, and the effort she intentionally

invest in success currently. She attributes her personal and academic success to hard work and wise choices.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Jane is feeling confident in her abilities and demonstrates her confidence by consistent effort and pride in her accomplishments. She recognizes that her old feelings of inability and lack of control were debilitating to the point that she just quit trying. She indicates that she feels a great deal of pride in her achievements in college and in her life in general.

Summary of Jane's Verification of Mastery Orientation

Jane began to recognize her potential in her early thirties. With that came two major realizations. The first was that she had value because she is a unique individual. She also realizes she had untapped abilities. With these realizations came a new perception of her successes and failures. She learned that her failures were not a result of inability, but rather the result of lack of effort, while her successes were a result of her ability.

Jane consistently demonstrated in the telling of her current life-story that she is confident in her abilities. She feels proud of her success in her marriage and family and in her college studies. She has taken control of her life and is making wise choices for herself. She recognizes that it is

through her own hard work that she is successful. This demonstrates that Jane is currently Mastery Oriented.

Larry's Story

Larry is 39, has been married for 16 years, and has a son who is a high school sophomore. He is a special education teacher of science and history in a Self Contained with Integration Classroom.

Larry was born and reared in a mid-sized midwestern city. Larry's dad died when he was six months old. His mother moved the family to California where she provided for them in a manner that extended family members disliked. As a result Larry and his older sister were removed from the home. His sister was reared by grandparents while Larry was reared by an aunt and uncle who adopted him. He has several half siblings that lived with his birth mother, and four siblings that are the natural children of his aunt and uncle.

Larry indicates he was occasionally beaten and regularly "taken advantage of." Larry says, "I kind of felt used because they made me do a lot of the work and chores that they didn't make the other ones do." Larry says because he was responsible for many chores and the care of his younger siblings, he was forced to quit sports and jobs to meet these responsibilities. His adopted parents were divorced when

Larry was in eighth grade. He indicated that was hard for him emotionally and increased his house chore responsibilities. He had saved over \$800 for college and senior social activities, but his adopted mother needed the money to pay bills. She borrowed it and never repaid him.

Larry always did well academically, but he did not give himself the credit for this achievement. Rather, he achieved to avoid severe punishment from his adopted parents. He says, "I only got a "D" once and I was indefinitely grounded."

Larry says he, "sassed" his adopted mother on one occasion. The next weekend he found himself in a new city living with his adopted father. He was a senior in high school, torn away from everything he knew. Larry's adopted father believed Larry should provide for himself and consequently did not give him any spending money for school activities, social activities, or clothes. Larry felt abandoned. His survival technique included working many hours at part time jobs to rebuild his savings and training extremely hard for wrestling. His hard work resulted in his winning the state wrestling title. As a sports hero, he gained the respect of his peers and was delighted when college recruiters sought him out.

He went to college his first two years on a wrestling scholarship. He was academically successful at this time, but Larry did not attribute his success to his ability, but rather to

nurturing teachers, coaches who supported him, and a friend that gave him spiritual insight.

Then he transferred to a college with a more prestigious wrestling program. He worked out with the wrestling team, but did not wrestle competitively because of academic ineligibility. Larry encounter a series of problems: failing grades, lack of family support, his girl friend's unplanned pregnancy, and their marriage; so he left college and joined the army.

Larry found himself wrestling again and this time for the army. He worked out at the Olympic Training Centers in Colorado Springs, Hawaii, and West Point. He won several Olympic regionals beginning in 1974, but did not compete in the Olympics because of injuries and illness. He wrestled competitively representing the United States, in many international competitions and often received first, second, or third place medals. It was many years before Larry acknowledged his wrestling talent. He said he denied his ability for years because he did not earn an Olympic gold medal.

After five years, Larry received an honorable discharge and went to a large midwestern university. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Physical Education and a kindergarten through twelfth-grade teaching certificate.

His first teaching job was in a mid-sized midwestern town as an in-school suspension teacher, head soccer coach, and head wrestling coach. It was a good first job experience, but after a few years he decided to move closer to his extended family. He enjoys his teaching, is currently studying for a special education endorsement, and plans to earn a master's in counseling.

Larry's Verification of Past Learned Helplessness

The following section provides a summary that demonstrates that Larry was learned helpless in the past. (see Appendix N for an in-depth analysis of his past Learned Helplessness.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Larry felt he didn't have the ability to succeed personally or academically. He initially formed this opinion at the age of seven or eight after he was taken from his mother and adopted by an abusive aunt and uncle. He felt he did not have the ability to be successful as a member of his adopted family. He continued to feel he did not have the ability to succeed in school, in college, or in wrestling. He attributed his successes to external forces but his failures to his inability.

Perception of Control

Larry routinely felt he did not have control over the choices in his life. In reality, he was expected to comply with the discipline and rules of his adopted parents even when they were brutal. While growing up he felt he did not have choices of who he would live with or how he spent his time or his money. As a young adult, he felt he did not have control over his choice of college, whether he was eligible to compete in wrestling, and under what circumstances he would marry.

Perceptions of Positive Outcome and Effort Independence

Larry viewed outcome and effort as independent of each other. When Larry was attending the university his junior and senior year, working long hours, practicing with the wrestling team, and dating, he had no time left for studying. He was academically ineligible to wrestle with the team. He did not see a relationship between the lack of study time and poor grades, but rather, felt his poor grades were a result of his inability.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Most Learned Helpless individuals simply give up when they feel they are unsuccessful. Larry, on the other hand, was not permitted by his adopted parents to simply quit. When

Larry received a "D" in high school he was severely punished. So he did enough to make at least "C's" to avoid punishment. However, when he found himself in college in what he called "a hopeless situation," he no longer needed parental permission to quit nor feared their reprisal. He dropped out of college and joined the army.

Summary of Larry's Learned Helplessness

Larry consistently demonstrated in the telling of his past life-story that he believed he lacked the ability to succeed personally and academically. He believed he was successful because others let him slip by and that he was failing because he did not have the ability. He believed situations in his life were not within his control, and he did not see a relationship between outcome and effort. Eventually he just quit trying, dropped out of college and joined the army. This demonstrates that Larry was Learned Helpless in the past. His Learned Helpless state continued until approximately his late twenties.

Larry's Verification of Current Mastery Orientation

The following section provides a summary that demonstrates that Jason is currently Mastery Oriented. (see Appendix N for an in-depth analysis of his current Mastery Orientation.)

Larry began to make the transition in his mid to late twenties when he began to believe in and trust his ability. As a result of his new perception of himself, he began to feel successful. He experienced success in the army, success in his marriage, and finally academic success in college. He began to believe he had ability and was experiencing success that was a result of his personal effort. When he consistently was able to trust his ability, take control of his life, recognize the relationship between outcome and effort, and persist even in difficult situations, the transition to Mastery Orientation was complete.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Larry has a new perception of his abilities. As Larry looks back, he can now acknowledge his success in high school and can credit his ability for this success. He now credits his freshman and sophomore college success to his ability, not just to a nurturing professor. Also, he no longer blames his lack of ability for his academic failure his junior and senior year of college. He acknowledges that he failed because he did not make time to study. Larry also recognizes that his wrestling career was a tremendous success. Larry feels successful in his life. He indicates he has a good marriage, a wonderful son, and

a career he really enjoys. He is a successful teacher and successfully continues his education.

Perception of Control

Larry spent the first twenty years of his life feeling that many of his life circumstances were as out of his control. He currently feels he has control over his personal and academic circumstances and has a new view of past control issues. Larry now trusts his abilities and trusts himself to make wise choices.

Perceptions of Outcome and Effort Dependence

Larry now views outcome and effort as mutually dependent. He sees his college ineligibility as a result of insufficient study time, he sees his wrestling success as a result of training, he sees his successful family relationship a result of making his family a priority, and he sees his successful career as a result of sufficient teacher preparation time and devotion to his students.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Larry feels confident in his abilities and demonstrates his confidence by not quitting in the face of difficult situations. He works to build a strong relationships even in difficult employment situations. He feels a great deal of pride in his

successful marriage and career. He is continuing to pursue additional certifications and a graduate degree.

Summary of Larry's Verification of Mastery Orientation

Larry consistently demonstrated in the telling of his current life-story that he is confident in his abilities. In his late twenties, he began to recognize his potential. He had wrestled successfully for the army, he had a successful family situation, and he had returned to college and was experiencing success. He felt he was making wise decisions and had control of his life. He could see the relationship between outcome and effort, and his efforts were reaping success. This demonstrates that Larry is currently Mastery Oriented.

Doug's Story

Doug is 39 years old, has been married for fourteen years, has one son, seven years old. He is a full time student working on a Bachelors in Social Science at a private four-year college. Doug works part-time as a grocery store cashier.

Doug worked a number of full time jobs after finishing a one year technical program, until he returned to college to finish a bachelors degree. He was a commercial printer, a retail photographer, started his own photography business which failed, worked retail sales, and worked direct sales for two

technology companies. He was successful at each job; however, he indicates that he had difficulty from time to time with paperwork, job stress, and coworker personality conflicts.

Doug experienced abuse from his teachers in first through third grade. His first-grade teacher physically abused another first-grade boy by breaking steel tipped yard sticks over his back at least once a day. Because of this ruler incident, he was afraid to disobey even when his request to use the restroom was ignored. He then would hide under his desk, embarrassed by wet pants. He was retained in first-grade, was assigned again to the same abusive teacher, and experienced another very difficult year.

His second- and third-grade teachers mentally abused Doug. They ridiculed him for his reading ability before his classmates saying, "Don't read as Doug reads." His punishment for lack of achievement (not for behavior) was standing with his nose in a circle on the black board. This elicited laughter from the class, and Doug felt humiliation.

Doug never reported his first through third-grade classroom experiences to his parents. He was too humiliated. He said, "I never told because I thought it was all my fault because I was stupid." The second semester of third grade a classmate tearfully told her mother how Doug was treated at school. This parent told Doug's mother, the situation went

before the school board, and the teacher was fired. Four years of humiliation was nearly impossible for Doug to overcome; however, he does remember his replacement third grade teacher fondly. He says, "she made me feel like I could do something."

Doug indicates he was passed along from that point on. He graduated with his class, but he feels he received his diploma under false pretenses saying, "I really hadn't done the work, Even if I did graduate, it wasn't the same as the other kids."

Doug remembers two triumphs in school. One was in high school speech class. Doug communicates well and speech class allowed him to demonstrate this ability. The other triumph was in German class. He was not permitted to take music or language classes because of his academic difficulties. Doug was in study hall the same period German class met across the hall. He was bored with study hall and would sit in on German. He did so well, the instructor eventually got him credit for two semesters of German.

Doug has been tested several times to determine his IQ and to determine whether his difficulties were the result of learning disabilities. His IQ was determined to be in a range from 115 to 150. His diagnosis of dyslexia resulted in his participation in a number of corrective therapies.

Doug says "he wants more in life." He isn't satisfied to be labeled "stupid" or to have boring repetitive jobs. He decided to return to college and finish a bachelors degree but was somewhat fearful, in light of his past academic problems, of stepping back into the academic arena.

He still struggles academically, but he is doing OK. Doug planned to complete an elementary education degree, but encountered several obstacles; so, he decided instead to finish a Bachelors of Social Science degree. He should finish his bachelors degree soon and may ultimately seek teacher certification.

Doug's Verification of Past Learned Helplessness

The following section provides a summary that demonstrates that Doug was Learned Helpless in the past. (see Appendix N for an in-depth analysis of his past Learned Helplessness.)

Perception of Successes and Failures

Doug felt he didn't have the ability to succeed. He formed this opinion in early elementary school where he was emotionally abused and inappropriately punished by several teachers. He felt he was abused because he was "stupid." Doug views his educational experience as a failure. He felt he was an

expert at academic failure. He said, "This has been going on since first grade."

Perception of Control

Doug felt he did not have control over the circumstances in his life. He felt he was a victim of abuse in the educational system and was a victim of his own inability. Because he saw himself as a victim, he felt he had no control over his life.

Perceptions of Positive Outcome and Effort Independence

Doug viewed outcome and effort as independent of each other. Because he viewed his academic failures as a result of his inability, he was unable to see the value of trying, because his perceived inability would prevent a successful outcome. His best efforts produced failure, verifying to him that outcome and effort are independent.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Doug's response to his failures was to quit trying. He went through the motions of school, was passed along, but didn't try again. He simply quit believing he could contribute anything to his success, and thus he felt shame and humiliation.

Summary of Doug's Learned Helplessness

Doug consistently demonstrated in the telling of his past life-story that he believed he lacked the ability to succeed. He also believed he could not change his ability; therefore, he believed he had no control over his life. He did not recognize a relationship between outcome and effort. To avoid feelings of humiliation and shame after failing, he simply quit trying. This demonstrates that Doug was Learned Helpless in the past. His Learned Helpless state continued until approximately his mid-thirties.

Doug's Verification of Current Mastery Orientation

The following section provides a summary that demonstrates that Doug is currently Mastery Oriented. (see Appendix N for an in-depth analysis of his current Mastery Orientation.)

Doug began to make the transition to Mastery Oriented in his personal life in his mid-twenties when he began to believe in and trust his ability. As a result of his new perception of himself, he began to experience successful employment. He transitioned academically in his mid-thirties, again when he began to believe in his abilities, and as a result began to experience academic success. He was so certain that he could not be successful academically because of his learning

disabilities that it took him longer to believe in himself academically. When he could consistently trust his ability, take control of his life, recognize the relationship between outcome and effort, and persist even in difficult situations, the transition to Mastery Orientation was complete.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Doug has a new perception of his abilities. He has returned to college to complete a bachelors degree and is experiencing success. He indicates that even though occasionally he has academic difficulties, that overall he feels confident in his abilities. His perception that he does have the ability to succeed in spite of some difficulties is evidence of his present Mastery Orientation.

Perception of Control

Doug spent the first twenty years of his life viewing his life circumstances as out of his control. He currently perceives that he has control over his personal and academic circumstances.

Perceptions of Outcome and Effort Dependence

Doug now views outcome and effort as mutually dependent. He recognizes that his hard work earned him the

outcome of a satisfying and successful career and that his efforts to learn adaptive learning strategies earned him the outcome of successful academic pursuits.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Doug believes in his abilities, recognizes that he has control over his life, and recognizes the relationship between outcome and effort and thus persists in his current endeavors. Even when situations are difficult academically, he continues to compensate for the difficulty and does not give up. He feels pride in his academic success and anticipates graduation.

Summary of Doug's Verification of Mastery Orientation

Doug consistently demonstrated in the telling of his current life-story that he is confident in his abilities, while recognizing and compensating for his learning disabilities. Because he understands his past academic problems, and has experienced success in his career, he trusts his abilities. He feels in control of his life and acknowledges his efforts are rewarded with successful outcomes. This demonstrates that Doug is currently Mastery Oriented.

Ted's Story

Ted is 39 years old, has been married for two years, and has no children. He was born to single parents who gave him up for adoption as a newborn. He was adopted by a middle-aged couple.

His adopted father was an alcoholic who abused Ted physically. On one occasion Ted was hospitalized in a coma as a result of a severe beating. When Ted was five, his adopted parents were divorced, and he lived with his adopted mother.

Ted's adopted maternal grandfather was an important part of his life. They were very close and did many things together. He is the only family member that Ted said "loved him." He always spent time with his "grandpa."

In first grade Ted was called from class to the principal's office. His adopted father, who had just been granted custody, took Ted to live with him. This was a surprise to him and his father offered no explanation. Ted ran away and returned to the home of his adopted mother where he learned she didn't want him, saying that he was "too much responsibility." The police returned him to his adopted father. He was severely punished for running away and was indefinitely grounded. He lived with his adopted father until he married who Ted remembers as "The woman from Hell."

At age seven Ted became a ward of the State. Ted lived in thirteen foster homes and three institutions during his childhood and adolescence. Some of the foster homes were good, some bad, some awful. He lived with one foster family who had a son about Ted's age. This son would steal money from his parents, and Ted was blamed for it. The parents poured Tabasco sauce down his throat until he would admit stealing the money, and then he was punished with "Cinderella" type chores while the other children played.

Ted was placed with some families that were good to him, but by now he was a very sad child. Ted said, "Kids, you know are a lot of work and hopefully with the work you get some fun back, like they are happy, and I just wasn't happy." He was passed from family to family in search of an appropriate placement. Ted remembers never feeling that he was a part of a family. He says, "Their own children would get treated differently and better consistently."

Ted indicates he was not doing well in school. He was unable to concentrate. He says, "I'm sitting in class day-dreaming about how I wish things were." Even in high school after he was in a much better foster care situation, he was daydreaming in school simply out of habit. Ted had not learned the fundamentals, so high school was very difficult for

him. Even the simplest tasks overwhelmed him. He felt "hopelessly" incapable.

Ted lived with a foster family in fourth and fifth grade and again in eighth, ninth, and tenth grade. This family was quite abusive to Ted. They deprived him of food, beat him, and restricted him from any activities outside the home. Feeling like a prisoner, he ran away a number of times, and warrants were placed for his arrest. He was found and returned to the same home.

When Ted was ten, his grandfather became ill and died. Ted did not learn of his death for several months. He was denied seeing him one last time, or saying good-bye to him at the funeral. He reacted by destroying the home of his current foster family and stealing money, and consequently he was removed from this home.

When Ted was in eighth grade he was returned to the home of the foster family he was removed from in fifth grade after exhibiting destructive behavior, acting out the pain he felt surrounding his grandpa's death. He again was abused and felt "imprisoned." He met a policeman who patrolled the school and neighborhood. This police officer befriended Ted and picked him up every morning at home and every afternoon from school. The police officer knew Ted was stealing food because he didn't get enough to eat in his foster home. They would ride

around together, he would buy him breakfast and snacks, and he would talk to Ted about honesty and integrity. The time they spent together kept Ted out of trouble, supplemented his diet, taught him about ethics, and instilled in him a love for law enforcement.

Ted met a girl in high school concert choir and they wanted to date. His foster mother would not permit him to be a part of after-school activities including choir activities and would not permit them to date. His girl friend (the daughter of a physician) would go home and tell her parents about this nice guy who was being abused by a foster family. Among other things, she told them he had contracted a serious skin disease and his teeth were rotting because of the neglect he was suffering in his home. Her parents were sympathetic to his plight, and they became his foster parents.

Things were much better in this home, but Ted knew he was "messing up" the dynamics in the new foster family and said, "I didn't care." Ted said, "I was having sex with their oldest daughter, . . . I was rude, I was crude, and I was worldly . . . and this was an upper middle class family. They weren't use to someone who swore, who sometimes got into fights, and told people to screw off."

The physician's family was divided on whether to let Ted stay in their home, and Ted manipulated the foster mother to

insist that he stay. Ted says, "Certainly I had every reason to believe that I was going to be sent away. Finally, for the first time in my life I felt really cared about and that felt so good, I was scared to death that it would end." He remained with this family until he was old enough to be on his own. They are still close today.

After high school Ted went to a community college and took two law enforcement courses. He did not have the academic foundation he needed to be successful. He quit college and worked for the Sheriff's Department for a short while, worked in private security for a short while, and then started his own business. Ted continued his education first in Emergency Medical Training (EMT), then martial arts, then with the American Management Association, and then a Bachelors degree in management and psychology.

In the mid 80's Ted's business went into Chapter Eleven-Reorganization Bankruptcy. He said they were making money, but clients were just not paying their bills, and he did not have inventory to use as collateral, so he could not borrow money to meet payroll. He realized during this period of time that he needed more education in order to be a success in business, so he went back to college for a bachelors degree. Ted is successfully completing a double major in business and psychology. Soon he will graduate and with honors.

Ted's Verification of Past Learned Helplessness

The following section provides a summary that demonstrates that Ted was learned helpless in the past (see Appendix N for an in-depth analysis of his past Learned Helplessness.)

Perception of Successes and Failures

Ted felt he didn't have the ability to succeed personally or academically. He felt unworthy to be notified timely of his grandfather's death. He felt he did not deserve the unconditional love of an adult parent figure. He felt he did not have the ability to succeed academically.

Perception of Control

Ted routinely felt he did not have control over his life. He experienced lack of control regularly as his residence changed, his school changed, his social worker changed, his friends changed, etc.

Perceptions of Positive Outcome and Effort Independence

Ted viewed outcome and effort as independent. Any effort he made to better his situation or even get away from a bad situation was rewarded with punishment. He either was

subjected to police intervention, relocation, or other forms of punishment. He soon learned that his efforts did not produce favorable outcome. Thus an interdependence between positive outcome and effort was not established.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Ted felt he was a personal failure. He felt his life situation was "hopeless." He never put forth any effort in school, but his school changed so often that it didn't seem to matter. He also experienced shame resulting from feeling he didn't belong anywhere.

Summary of Ted's Learned Helplessness

Ted consistently demonstrated in the telling of his past life-story that he believed he lacked the ability to succeed personally or academically. He believed he had no control over the circumstances in his life. He did not see a relationship between outcome and effort; he simply tried to survive from one new situation to another. He also experienced shame as a result of his perception of inability and his lack of belonging. This demonstrates that Ted was Learned Helpless in the past. His Learned Helpless state continued until approximately his early twenties.

Ted's Verification of Current Mastery Orientation

The following section provides a summary that demonstrates that Ted is currently Mastery Oriented. (see Appendix N for an in-depth analysis of his current Mastery Orientation.)

Ted began to make the transition to Mastery Oriented in his early twenties when he began to believe in and trust his ability. As a result of his new perception of himself, he became willing to take risks and experience success in his business and in learning situations. When he consistently was able to trust his ability, take control of his life, recognize the relationship between outcome and effort, and persist even in difficult situations, the transition to Mastery Orientation was complete.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Ted has a new perception of his abilities. He feels worthy as a child who was part of a difficult institution system. He now sees himself as intelligent. In fact, when I asked him how he viewed his intelligence now he said, "Well, I'm in MENSA." He also see his business as a success and attributes all of these successes to his ability.

Perception of Control

Ted spent the first twenty years of his life viewing his life circumstances as out of his control. He indicated he decided not to be a victim. He took control of his life, began a business with \$5,000 of capital provided by a foster parent, and began a college education.

Perceptions of Outcome and Effort Dependence

Ted now views outcome and effort as mutually dependent. This is demonstrated by his new attitude toward effort and outcome. He recognizes that through his hard work, his business and his education are successful. His business is flourishing and he will soon graduate with honors with a Bachelor's degree.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Ted is feeling confident in his abilities and demonstrating his confidence by not quitting in the face of difficult situations. His business in the late 80s was in Chapter Eleven Bankruptcy. He could have walked away at that time, but didn't. Instead he persisted, received wise financial council, followed the council, and turned his business around. He feels pride in his abilities and in his accomplishments.

Summary of Ted's Verification of Mastery Orientation

Ted consistently demonstrated in the telling of his current life-story that he is confident in his abilities. He feels proud of his success in his career, his success in his marriage, and his success in his college studies. He has taken control of his life and is making wise choices for himself. He recognizes that it is through his hard work that he is successful and continues to work toward his life's goals even in difficult times. This demonstrates that Ted is currently Mastery Oriented.

Findings

Each of the individuals in the study transitioned to Mastery Oriented. They transitioned at different times in their lives, but they had some common influences that were assistive in their transition. The common influences called patterns are presented below.

Pattern One: Accepting Person

All of the participants had specific individuals in their lives that played an important role in their transition to Mastery Orientation. These individuals cared deeply about the participant and saw the participant's untapped potential. However, the important role they played that influenced the transition was more than just caring for the participant and

having insight into the participant's potential. The participants had a number of individuals in their lives that cared about them and saw their potential, but did not influence the Learned Helpless to Mastery Oriented change. There was something more this individual demonstrated than just caring

First, there was a relationship between the accepting individual that influenced a change from LH to MO and the participant. Not only did the accepting individual care about the participant, but the participant also cared about and respected the accepting individual so a relationship could be established in which caring could be both given and received.

Because the participants' relationships with their accepting individuals was one of mutual respect, the participants were able to receive caring from the accepting person. The participants began to feel safe, and they began to feel heard and understood.

The accepting person in the participants' lives provided unconditional belief in the participants. They did not require the participant to be something they were not, could not, or did not want to be. They accepted the participants completely without contingencies.

The accepting persons accepted the participants unconditionally, established a relationship of mutual respect, and helped the individuals meet needs they were unable to

meet for themselves at the time, such as transportation, food, etc.

Because the accepting person unconditionally believed and trusted in them, the participants began to believe and trust in themselves and were then willing to take risks to try activities that had been failures in the past. As they continued to receive unconditional belief from their accepting persons, they began to accept themselves. As trust in themselves grew, they were enabled to attribute their successes to themselves, an internal focus, believing they had the ability to succeed. This new perception is quite different from their old perceptions that their successes were a result of external forces, such as an easy task or the result of another's effort. Because the accepting person's unconditional belief in them and acceptance of them, they were able to believe and accept themselves.

The underlying theme of unconditional belief which was present across the life-stories of these participants was manifest in various ways within each participant's life. The following vignettes represent an illustration of these manifestations.

Jason also had one accepting individual in his life who demonstrated unconditional belief, his girl friend/wife. He says she loved him when he was failing and dropped out of

college and when he worked at the packing plant; times when Jason felt very "unlovable." He says, he doesn't know why she stuck with him during this time, but she did. He says, "she is a wonderful girl and loves me the way I am."

Paula had two caring individuals in her life. The first was a high school guidance counselor who befriended her, listened to her problems, gave her wise counsel, provided transportation, encouraged her, supported her, and motivated her sometimes firmly.

Paula also had an individual in her life who provided her a home when she was pregnant. She gave her an environment in which she could flourish. She gave her a place to live, provided for her physical needs, gave her adult friendship and supervision, provided structure, imposed rules, encouraged her, and gave her hope for the future. Paula said, "She believed in me when I couldn't believe in myself." Such behaviors and beliefs demonstrated by both Paula's high school guidance counselor and her adult friend represented the outward manifestation of unconditional belief.

Jane had two caring individuals in her life who demonstrated unconditional belief. The first was her husband. He believed in her and was quite surprised after they were married to discover her insecurities about her abilities. He believed she could do anything, and Jane indicated after fifteen

years of marriage, "they [her husband's beliefs] rub off on you." He believed in her when she did not believe in herself.

When Jane returned to college, she encountered an instructor in the learning center who has helped her develop a belief in her abilities. She treated her as an equal. For example, when Jane would thank her for her help, she would always respond, "Thank you for letting me." Such outwardly respectful and caring behaviors offered by the accepting persons in Jane's life were demonstrative of unconditional belief.

Larry indicated, when he was a freshman and sophomore in college, his roommate was not experiencing the same difficulties he was. When he questioned him about this, his roommate indicated the reason was because of his faith in God. That made a profound impact on Larry, and over the next ten years, he read books including the Bible, attended seminars, and took classes at a Bible College, all in an attempt to understand better the phenomena he observed in his roommate's life. Larry indicates he receives feelings of unconditional acceptance from God and that has given him new perceptions of himself. Although this may raise some controversy in that God is certainly not a person, perhaps it was his acceptance by the congregation of his church or other

interactions with individuals in a religious setting that gave him feelings of acceptance.

Doug had four caring individuals in his life which demonstrated unconditional belief in him; his substitute third grade teacher, his college advisor, and his parents. Doug's substitute third-grade teacher was the first teacher that Doug remembers that made him "feel like I could do something." Although her acceptance came long before Doug actually transitioned to Mastery Oriented, her impact on him was important enough for him to remember his perceptions of her many years later and reported it as unconditional belief. His parents were also very accepting of Doug and always provided a learning atmosphere for him. Finally, his college advisor who understood dyslexia (his learning disability) provided an understanding environment and intervened with his professors when necessary. Therefore, Doug had an environment in his classes in which he could succeed. Such behaviors and beliefs demonstrated by these accepting people represented the outward manifestation of unconditional belief.

Ted also had several individuals in his life who offered unconditional belief in him manifest in the following ways. The first was a social worker who taught him to be appreciative for the things others did for him. Next was a foster father who taught him to finish what he started. Next was a policeman

who taught him integrity, provided a place with him to stay out of trouble (his patrol car), provided extra food for a teenager who never got enough at his foster home, and gave him a love for a career in law enforcement. Lastly was a foster mother who gave him unconditional belief, a home, an environment of love, siblings, and cared that he learned to present himself well, so tirelessly corrected his grammar. She provided a safe and loving environment in which Ted could finally begin to concentrate on things other than survival. Such behaviors and beliefs demonstrated by Ted's last foster mother, the policeman, one foster father, and one of his social workers represented the outward manifestation of unconditional belief in him.

Pattern Two: Critical Consciousness Raising Event

Five of the participants had one or more critical consciousness raising events that triggered an awakening into their personal insights. These were emotionally powerful significant events that triggered and or confronted the participant with the opportunity to actively make a choice. Because of the strength of the event, it was not possible for the participant to ignore or side-step making an active decision. Each participant was faced with making a critical decision that would reap either positive or negative consequences. The

following vignettes represent an illustration of these manifestations.

Jason had several critical consciousness-raising events. He dropped out of college his senior year. He took a meat packing job that was one of the most distasteful in the plant. His girl friend, now wife, became pregnant. This combination of events got his attention, which helped him focus on actions he needed to take. He chose to get married, seek a professional career, and finish college.

Paula's critical consciousness-raising event was her pregnancy at nineteen. When she decided to continue the pregnancy, she was faced with a constant reminder that she must care for and provide for her child. She responded to this crisis by making the decision to move in with a woman recommended through Catholic Social Services, to work part time, and to go to college part time.

Larry had several critical consciousness-raising events. He was making unsatisfactory academic progress his junior and senior years of college, he was academically ineligible to wrestle in collegiate competition, and his girl friend became pregnant. This combination of events got his attention, which helped him focus on actions he needed to take. He decided to drop out of college, get married, and combine his athletic ability and career choice by wrestling for the army.

Doug had two critical consciousness-raising events. The first was when he got fired from a sales job. He said (talking to himself), "if you go on like this, you aren't going to have anything. You aren't going to have a family, you're not going to be able to achieve the things you want to do." He indicated he had a choice to either try a new profession and start at the bottom, go back to retail and that "I didn't want to do," or go back to school. He chose to return to college to earn a Bachelor degree.

The second critical consciousness raising event was when he was diagnosed with dyslexia. Although his educational psychologist began to suspect Doug was experiencing dyslexia, he was still in the early stages of understanding this learning disability. Although he could give it a name, there was no known effective treatment intervention at that time. Nevertheless, it allowed Doug to explain his academic difficulties in specific terms so that he could stop believing he didn't have ability.

Ted's critical consciousness-raising event was when he was entrusted with \$5,000 from his foster parents to start his security business. He did not want to fail in his entrepreneurial effort and disappoint them. He chose to buy a used car and typewriter, do all the selling of his security services to business himself, and also work all the security

duty. He said, "Because I had been so second rate all my life, I wanted to be first rate for a change and nothing was going to keep me from doing that." He chose to work extremely hard, and use his borrowed resources wisely.

Jane did not share a critical consciousness-raising event in her interviews. However, when the research findings were discussed individually with her, she indicated she did experience a critical consciousness-raising event. She chose however, not to share the details of the event with this researcher. It was apparent that even though she experienced growth from being faced with making a wise choice, that she was still experiencing a great deal of emotional pain associated with this memory.

Pattern Three: Sense of Responsibility

Five of the participants began to feel a need to take responsibility in their lives, to which they each responded appropriately. In choosing to accept this responsibility, the behaviors they exhibited were mature and growth-producing. They began to demonstrate discipline in their approach to responsibility and began to recognize that the consequences they would experience were the direct result of the decisions they made and the actions they took. They began to realize

that their hopes and dreams could become reality, thus they were able to participate in realistic goal-setting activities.

Jason accepted the responsibilities of a wife, a child, and a career. Paula accepted the responsibilities of a child, escaped from an abusive relationship, and returned to school. Larry accepted the responsibilities of a wife, a child, and being a soldier. Doug accepted the responsibility to provide for a family and change careers. Ted accepted the responsibilities of starting a new business and using the investors' money wisely.

Summary

Each of the participant's life-story is unique. Each came from a different family backgrounds. Some were reared with their birth parents while others were reared by foster or adopted parents. Some had academic difficulties while others did not. Some are married, some are single, and some have children; some do not.

Despite divergent backgrounds, there were common influences across participants that assisted in their transition from Learned Helpless to Mastery Oriented. They were, an accepting person providing unconditional belief in the participant, a critical consciousness-raising event, and a sense of responsibility. Each of these influences created self-awareness in the participants. Through self-awareness they

were able to make wise choices resulting in success. Their self-awareness also enabled them to appropriately assign responsibility for their success to their hard work and ability.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Introduction

This study has considered the transition factors that have influenced an individual to change from being Learned Helplessness to Mastery Orientation. Six individuals were studied through their telling of their life stories and their personal perceptions of prominent events in their lives.

Discussion of the findings

Three patterns were evident in the life stories of the participants: an accepting person who provided unconditional belief, a critical consciousness-raising event, and taking responsibility for self.

Pattern One: An Accepting Person

The first pattern was labeled, "An Accepting Person." Each one of these accepting people demonstrated his or her belief in the participant through their caring behaviors and respectful attitudes toward the participants. Such acceptance given by parents in childhood is thought to be mandatory for healthy emotional development (Rogers, 1957).

Most of the participants lacked this early nurturance and acceptance and, as a result, seemed unable to establish a

positive sense of self-acceptance. Without positive self-acceptance gained during childhood, the participants seemed to doubt their intrinsic value, and hence, subsequent developmental tasks proved difficult. The need that was met by the important person seems to have been the offering of unconditional belief, which had been absent from the participant's childhood.

In this atmosphere, the participant grew to feel cared for and accepted by the important person. From this caring and acceptance the participant seemed to begin to care for and accept himself or herself. This belief of being worthy and valuable seemed to lead to the courage to take risks necessary for positive growth and change. If the risk taking was successful, the participant could attribute positive results to his or her own skills or effort as opposed to luck. The acceptance offered by the accepting person seemed to help facilitate the change in the participant's self perception from that of being helpless and dependent on others to that of being an individual that is Mastery Oriented.

Pattern Two: A Critical Consciousness-Raising Event

The second pattern was labeled "A Critical Consciousness-Raising Event." In each individual's life, a single or combination of critical consciousness-raising events took place in which a

participant was actively confronted with the need to make a conscious choices to alter his or her life circumstances and make informed decisions based upon assessment of positive and negative consequences. The actions that were then taken seemed to lead to a positive result and the restructuring of each participant's belief system concerning one's positive perceptions of his or her own ability.

Pattern Three: A Sense of Responsibility

The third pattern was labeled "A Sense of Responsibility." This pattern, which appeared to be present across five of the participants, was a need to take responsibility in one's life and then the willingness to do so. Through acceptance of this responsibility, the participants exhibited mature and growth producing behaviors which led to positive outcomes. As a result of their discipline and acceptance of responsibility, they seemed to begin to learn that consequences followed from the decisions and actions they took.

Becoming aware of their responsible behaviors appeared to then have led to a valuing of self and one's potential. Subsequently, more risk taking seemed to be initiated and carried through by the participants. Realizing that their responsible behaviors resulted in successful outcomes, the

internal perceptions of each participant seemed to change from Learned Helplessness to Mastery Orientation.

Variation Within Patterns and Interrelationship of Patterns

The participants all identified unconditionally caring people that were involved in their life during the time they experienced a Critical Consciousness-Raising Event. The participants agreed it was the belief the accepting person exhibited toward them that helped them believe in themselves and transition to a state of Mastery Orientation.

Three of the participants identified "Accepting Persons" that were involved in their life during difficult experience that occurred prior to the Critical Consciousness-Raising. Even though this accepting person was not involved during the Critical Consciousness-Raising Event, the participants were unwilling to eliminate them from their list of accepting people in their lives. One might speculate that the memory of this unconditionally accepting person influenced their current belief in themselves and thus influenced their transition.

Each participant felt the need to take responsibility for his or her life and responded appropriately. This need seemed to arise from the Critical Consciousness-Raising Event situation in which he or she found his or herself. The strength received from the accepting person's belief in them coupled with the

awareness which occurred as a result of the Critical Consciousness-Raising Event seemed to enable them to make and then follow through on the participant's life changing positive choices.

The transition process itself seemed to occur at different times in the participants' lives. Three of the individuals seemed to make the transition to Mastery Oriented in their early twenties, one in his mid to late twenties, one in his personal life in his mid twenties and academically in his mid thirties, and one in her early thirties.

The transition from LH to MO happened quickly for some of the participants and over a period of time for others. The relationship between time and transition doesn't seem to contribute to our understanding of the LH to MO transition phenomena.

As one continues to ponder the learned helpless phenomena, the question that continues to plague those who would idealistically like to see every learned helpless individual transition to mastery orientation is why one person is able to make the transition from LH to MO while another is not. This is apparent from simply looking around. One can see individuals almost daily with learned helpless perceptions who are in crisis, who are surrounded by people who care about them, and who even desperately want to behave responsibly

and initiate change, but who are unable to bring about such a transition. Why? There must be factors that prevent transition as well as factors that promote it.

Summary of Transition Patterns

Each of these three patterns increased the participant's awareness of himself or herself. Self-awareness is very important in effective decision making as it leads to rational thought processes. Once self-awareness is obtained, the individual has a choice as to whether to continue the Learned Helpless behavior or choose to act in a more Mastery Oriented fashion.

Each one of the participants in this study seemed to develop self awareness through an accepting person(s) belief in them, through critical consciousness-raising event(s), and (five of the six) through accepting the need to take responsibility and follow through with one's efforts in order to realize positive outcome. Their self-awareness was manifested in their perceptions of their abilities, their view of their personal control over their lives, their view of the relationship between outcome and effort, their responses to their successes and failures.

They seemed to no longer view their successes as a result of external influences but rather proudly viewed them as a

result of their personal ability recognizing they did have the ability to succeed. They seemed to comprehend a relationship between outcome and effort and thus felt in control of their life circumstances, using degrees of personal effort as the mechanism to reach their desired outcome; success. They seemed to demonstrate pride as a result of the success achieved through their effort and ability.

They seemed to no longer view their failures as a result of their inability, but rather viewed their failures as resulting from lack of personal effort. They appeared to comprehend the relationship which exists between outcome and effort, recognizing that failure situations could be corrected through additional personal effort. A sense of guilt could still be experienced by the participants when failure resulted from their insufficient effort, but they no longer felt the overwhelming shame which existed previously. The acknowledgment that success is contingent upon the individual's increased effort, helped combat any negative self-attributions.

Discussion of the Findings with the Review of the Literature

The researcher had two concerns with educational intervention strategies used by researchers in the past to facilitate a change from LH to MO. The first concern was the

lack of available strategies for teachers for use to facilitate the change process. The second was the concern that individuals could learn correct Mastery Orientation overt responses without changing their introspective, covert Learned Helpless perceptions. In other words, although they may appear outwardly to be Mastery Oriented, they may continue inwardly their Learned Helpless belief system. If both covert and overt behaviors are necessary, then survey or other research procedures emphasizing just one could make false identifications of the individuals.

The researcher now has a different perspective of the past intervention strategies based upon the conclusions of this study. Briefly the past intervention strategies included 1) reinforcement strategies; either verbal reinforcement from others, written reinforcement from others, and/or verbal reinforcement from self 2) a tangible and exchangeable token element of reinforcement with verbal reinforcement, 3) journaling and owning success, 4) mastery learning techniques, 5) number of successful experiences, 6) supportive corrective instruction, 7) videotaped testimony of a professor's success resulting from ability and effort, and videotaped testimony of college senior's success resulting from effort.

Each of these past intervention strategies had some element of the change influences identified in this study. This

study found that unconditional belief of another person is a important factor in facilitating change from LH to MO.

Unconditional belief might have been felt by the students who received the retraining strategies and hence might have served as a confounding variable in previous studies. For example, students receiving reinforcement strategies, such as verbal or written reinforcement from the teacher (Fowler & Peterson, 1981; Chapin & Dyck, 1976; Relich et al., 1986; Andrews & Debus, 1978; Supersaxo et al., 1987), may have construed this as unconditional belief by the teacher within the context of the relationship developed. Even students receiving token reinforcements could have construed the relationship built between the teacher and student as unconditional belief. It might have been the unconditional belief within the relationship that contributed to the change process along with the quantitatively measured research variables.

This study also found that critical consciousness raising events are important factors to facilitate a change from LH to MO. Certainly failing grades in college that the students were experiencing in Perry and Penner's (1990) and Wilson and Linville's (1982) studies could qualify as a critical consciousness raising event and interventions in the form of video taped testimonials could have been interpreted as someone caring enough about other students facing the same

crises to take the time to offer encouragement through their taped testimonial.

This study also found that a sense of responsibility was a important factor to facilitate a change from LH to MO. The studies that employed mastery learning techniques (Guskey et al 1983), or successful experiences (Dweck, 1975), or even supportive corrective instruction (Allen & Dietrich, 1991) were probably assessing, in considerable part, the degree to which the students were developing a sense of responsibility for their own learning rather than measuring the effect of the intervention strategy.

The researcher also believes, based on this study's findings, it may be better to focus transition intervention on providing opportunities for individuals to become aware of their abilities, to make wise choices, and to accept responsibility for these choices, all while in an environment where unconditional belief is demonstrated.

Implications of the Study

This study has implications for professionals and individuals that are involved with Learned Helpless adults both inside and outside the educational arena. Based on pattern one, An Accepting Person that believed in the participant, college instructors and others need to understand that unconditional

belief is extremely important. Once aware of its importance, they can assess their personal attitudes toward the students in their class, and if they find themselves lacking, take steps to make improvements. It may be that in some students' lives, their instructor is the only unconditionally believing person.

Also based on pattern one, it is important for teachers to set up accepting systems within their classroom in which students can learn to respect and accept each other. A suggestion to help instructors implement accepting systems in the classroom might be systems that discourage classroom competition. Several of the individuals in this study while in a state of Learned Helplessness were unable to recognize or accept their successes because their successes were not the "highest score" or the "best grade," etc. Competitive environments seem to encourage us to assign self-value based on our placement within the competitive system. This kind of system does not provide for acceptance at any level of accomplishment.

Another suggestion to help instructors implement accepting systems in the classroom might be to provide students with an opportunity to work in cooperative groups. The best skills of each group member can be utilized to contribute to a mutually successful project. Once you are accepted in a small group and experience a successful learning

experience; one might feel better about oneself and one's abilities. This is a way to promote acceptance between students.

Based on pattern one and two (Accepting Person and A Critical Consciousness-Raising Event), it might also be important for students to be involved with accepting people outside the classroom. Many institutions of higher learning provide counselors to assist the student with crisis situations in his or her lives. This might be an opportunity for the student to be involved with another accepting person and also might provide them the opportunity to be involved in small group activities with accepting peers. It could also be a time when counselors could help the individual focus on internal factors for his or her successes and failures rather than external factors.

Most Current Learned Helpless Research

Learned Helplessness continues to be the subject of much research because the phenomena continues to debilitate individuals and attract the attention of researchers. Much of the ongoing research looks at the Learned Helpless phenomena and how it is manifested in different settings, such as multicultural empowerment, emotional/behavioral disorders, depression, and learning disabled to name a few. There continues to be a lack of research that identifies or tests the

effectiveness of intervention strategies that change an individual's perceptions from LH to MO; although, researchers do speculate strategies that might be effective.

Recommendations for further Research

Further research is suggested to further our understanding of the learned helpless phenomenon in general and specially the transitional process to mastery orientation. With this purpose in mind, this research plans to continue this research looking at a case study of an learned helpless adult who is personally, professionally, and academically successful, but has not made the transition to Mastery Oriented. Possibly understanding the perceptions of this individual will lead us to understanding more about why transition does not occur.

This researcher also plans to continue research in the area by studying individuals in other life situations than those who have returned to finish bachelor degrees as non-traditional students. Some of those life situations might be adults who are not and do not plan to attend college, adults in professional positions, or adults in major life trauma, etc.

This researcher plans to continue research in the area by comparing the perceptions of Mastery Oriented and Learned Helpless adults in successful and unsuccessful life experiences. She wishes to further observe the manifestation of expected

difference of learned helpless and mastery oriented individuals' perceptions. However, she also wishes to uncover unexpected differences and similarities of learned helpless and mastery oriented individuals' perceptions whatever they might be.

And finally this researcher plans to search for factors that prevent LH to MO transition as well as factors that promote it.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Table A1

Summary of Review of the Literature

| Author | Grade | Retraining Method | Finding | Biases |
|--------------------------|-------|---|--|--------|
| Fowler & Peterson (1981) | 4-6th | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Success-teacher positive feedback. Failure-teacher neutral feedback. 2. Success-teacher positive and attributional feedback. Failure-teacher neutral and attributional feedback. 3. Success-teacher positive feedback and self attributional feedback. Failure-teacher neutral feedback and self attributional feedback. | Statistically significant attributional changes occurred after all three treatment methods; however, one method was not statistically significantly better than another. | None |
| Dweck (1975) | 5th | Verbal attributional reinforcement after failure | Treatment and control group showed statistically significant difference in attributional change and performance. | None |

| Author | Grade | Retraining Method | Finding | Biases |
|--------------------------------|-------|--|--|--|
| Chapin & Dyck (1976) | 5-7 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Up to three failures, attributional retraining. 2. Up to three failures, absence of attributional retraining. 3. Failure always followed by a success; attributional retraining. 4. Failure always followed by a success; absence of attributional retraining. 5. Success-only condition-Control group. | Treatment and control group showed statistically significant difference in attributional change and performance. | <p>Attributional styles were not assessed prior to treatment.</p> <p>Students in attributional retraining groups may have felt more caring from the teacher than the children in the other groups.</p> |
| Relich, Debus, & Walker (1986) | 6th | <p>M=Teacher modeling only of division solutions.</p> <p>SP=Self instruction only of division skills.</p> <p>MA=Teacher modeling and attribution retraining.</p> <p>SPA=Self instruction and attribution retraining.</p> <p>C=Control</p> | Found a statistically significant difference after attributional training. | None |
| Andrews & Debus (1978) | 6th | <p>Teacher verbal reinforcement</p> <p>Teacher verbal reinforcement with token</p> <p>Control group</p> | <p>Statistically significant differences were found between both treatment groups and the control group.</p> <p>The treatment groups were not statistically significantly different from each other.</p> | None |

| Author | Grade | Retraining Method | Finding | Biases |
|-------------------------|-------|--|---|--|
| Supersaxo et al. (1987) | 6th | Written feedback from teachers on students' tests. | Found written feedback increased attribution to ability, decreased attributions to ease of task, decreased failure attribution to ability, and found no change in failure attributions to effort. | Teachers may be misinterpreting the student's perspective. Attributional styles were not assessed prior to treatment. |
| Reiher & Dembo (1984) | 7-8th | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students were taught to recognize and self-monitor thoughts in failure situations focusing on intrinsic methods and self instruction; self instruct with both effort statement and positive reinforcement; practice of their new skills. 2. Students were taught to recognize and self-monitor thoughts in failure situations focusing on extrinsic methods, externally oriented behavioristic approach; self instruct with both effort statement and positive reinforcement; practice of their new skills. 3. Control group. | <p>Found statistically significant differences in treatment and control groups.</p> <p>Found no difference between treatment groups.</p> | Twenty-five percent of the students dropped out of the study for reasons such as scheduling difficulties, teacher resistance, subject's confusion to time and location, illness. |

| Author | Grade | Retraining Method | Finding | Biases |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--|---|--|
| Allen & Dietrich (1991) | H.S. | Supportive instruction (peer tutoring, additional worksheets, extra help from the teacher) | Found statistically significant differences with supportive instruction. | Reliability and validity figures were not reported for the testing instrument used. Attributional styles were not assessed prior to treatment. |
| Guskey, Bennin-ga, & Clark (1983) | College | 1. Mastery learning (short quizzes, formative tests, corrective practice). 2. Control group. | No statistically significant difference. | None |
| Wilson & Linville (1982) | College Students | The retraining consisted of a one time videotaped interviews in which senior students talked about how their GPA had improved over their four years of college. The attribution retraining was intended to change attributions for performance from stable to unstable causes. | Found statistically significant improvement in standardized test scores and GPA. Found no statistically significant difference in changes of attributional patterns. | Maturation of college students may be responsible for the results of the study. Unable to show the treatment variable rather than other variables influenced the results. |

| Author | Grade | Retraining Method | Finding | Biases |
|-------------------------|---------|--|--|--|
| Perry & Penner (1990) | college | Video of a male psychology professor recounting a critical period in his college education when he was ready to drop out, but because of the persistent urging of a friend he remained in school. The speaker encouraged students to persist saying persistence is an important part of success and that long term persistence enhances ability. | Found statistically significant difference in changes of attributional patterns. | Maturation of college students may be responsible for the results of the study. Unable to show the treatment variable rather than other variables influenced the results. |
| Connell & Kimmel (1982) | Adult | Women analyzed attributional patterns, journalized, owned successes. Compared to definition of male attributional patterns. | No statistically significant attributional changes. | Ceiling effect Lack of emphasis of retraining. Individual preferences. |

Appendix B

Presentation of Review of the Literature Articles

Fowler and Peterson (1981) found that an attributional retraining program had a positive effect on changing students' debilitating attributional responses. They divided fourth through sixth graders into four groups: three treatment and one control. The treatments were as follows:

Treatment method one: The teacher provided positive feedback for correct trials ("That was very good.") and neutral feedback for incorrect trials ("No, you didn't get that."; Fowler & Peterson, 1981, p. 252).

Treatment method two: The teacher provided positive and attribution feedback for correct trials ("That was very good. That means you tried hard.") and neutral and attributional feedback for incorrect trials ("No, you didn't get that. That means you have to try harder."; Fowler & Peterson, 1981, p., 252).

Treatment method three: Students were taught these attribution statements; "I got that right. That means I tried hard." "No, I didn't get that right. That means I have to try harder." Following correct trials they were provided positive feedback from, the teacher ("That was good.") and self feedback (They were asked to tell themselves the attributional feedback statements they were taught to use after successes). Following

incorrect trials they were provided neutral feedback from the teacher ("No, you didn't get that.") and self feedback (They were asked to tell themselves the attribution feedback statement they were taught to use after failures; Fowler & Peterson, 1981, p. 252).

In comparison to the control group, Fowler and Peterson (1981) found significant attributional changes occurred after all three treatment methods; however, they did not find one method significantly better than another. They concluded that external affirmation (from the teacher) and internal affirmation (from the student themselves) both positively changed attribution patterns.

Dweck (1975) found that an attributional retraining program had a positive effect on changing student's debilitating attributional responses.

She divided Learned Helpless fifth grade children into two groups: a treatment (attribution retraining) group and a control (success only experiences) group. The success-only group received a series of trials each resulting in a planned success. The retraining group received a series of three trials two of which were planned failures. In the retraining group when the child failed, he or she was told by the researcher, "That means one should have tried harder" (Dweck, 1975, p. 1079).

The success-only group continued to display debilitating performance following failure. The attribution retraining group maintained or improved their performance following failure. The attribution retraining group also demonstrated increased emphasize on effort over ability. The children in the success-only treatment showed no such increase (Dweck, 1975).

Chapin and Dyck (1976) found that an attributional retraining program had a positive effect on changing students' debilitating attributional responses. The researchers selected 30, fifth-, sixth-, and seventh-grade children who were reading below grade level. Their attributional styles were not assessed. The methodology included a pretest, three training days, and a posttest (Chapin & Dyck, 1976).

The researchers established four treatment conditions: two levels of partial reinforcement (e.g., a failure always followed by a success, up to three failures in a row), paired with the presence or absence of attribution retraining; and a control group, success-only condition (Chapin & Dyck, 1976).

Retraining consisted of the following: after success trials children were told, "That was very good; that means you tried." After failure trials, they were told, "No, you didn't get that; that means you should have tried harder." Groups without attribution retraining were simply told, "That's right," or "No, that's wrong" (Chapin & Dyck, 1976, p. 512).

Chapin and Dyck (1976) found that partial reinforcement (sometimes succeeding and sometimes failing) and attribution retraining enhanced children's persistence in achievement situation. The children's effort attributions increased in their reading behavior as a result of both length of failure trials and attribution retraining.

The children in this study were identified as slow readers, but they were not identified as Learned Helpless. Therefore, although the attributional retraining produced statistically significant results, possibly the students were already Mastery Oriented and simply improved, rather than changed from a Learned Helpless status before retraining to Mastery Orientation status after retraining.

Also because of the phrasing of the attributional retraining, it is possible the children in the treatment group felt the researcher was concerned about them and the children in the control group did not feel the same level of concern. Because of the different concern levels the children might have experienced and the fact that the Learned Helpless status of the group was not determined before introducing the treatment variable, the internal validity of the study may have been compromised.

Relich, Debus, and Walker (1986) found that an attributional retraining program had a positive effect on changing students' debilitating attributional responses.

Relich et al. (1986) administered attributional retraining treatment to Learned Helpless sixth graders. Eighty four math students were placed in four groups: Group one (M) Modeling (e.g., The teacher verbally explained division while modeling the solution. The teacher provided feedback indicating only the accuracy of the solution); Group two (MA) modeling with attribution (e.g., The teacher verbally explained division while modeling the solution. The teacher provided attributional feedback); Group three (SP) self instruction (e.g. Students reviewed an instruction booklet for solving division problems. The teacher provided feedback indicating the accuracy of the solution only); Group four (SPA) self instruction and attributional feedback (e.g. Students reviewed an instruction booklet for solving division problems and received attributional feedback from the teacher); Group five (C) was the control group.

Relich et al. (1986) administered attributional retraining treatment to Learned Helpless sixth graders. The teacher made effort/ability attribution statements after success and failure trials. Statements made after success trials were, "That's correct; see, you have the ability to do divisions when you try

hard" (p. 204); The statements made after failure trials were, "That's incorrect; I know you have the ability but you just have to try harder" (p. 204). Students attributional statements were solicited. Most of the students attributed their success and failures to ability and/or effort. The control group feedback was simply: "Yes, that's right," or "No, that's wrong" (p. 204).

Each treatment produced significant differences between pre- and post-test scores on the index of helplessness scale. The control group's index of helplessness scale pre- and post-test scores were not significantly changed. There were no significant differences among the treatment groups (Relich et al., 1986).

Andrew and Debus (1978) found that an attributional retraining program had a positive effect on changing students' debilitating attributional responses.

Andrew and Debus (1978) studied 42, sixth-grade males to see if an attributional retraining program would significantly change their success and failure ascriptions. The subjects were divided into three groups: control group, social reinforcement group, and social reinforcement with token reward group.

The control group completed a set of tasks and received no training. The Social reinforcement group completed the same set of tasks after mechanically indicating on a scale of zero to ten (0 - 10) how well they expected to do on the task

and why, followed by a verbalization of their expectations. The teacher reinforced the students successes saying, "That's good!"; "Very good (John)!"; "OK!"; "Good!" For a failure trial the teacher said, "Very good (John), we usually fail because we don't try hard enough, don't we?" If a student did not make an attribution to effort after four success trials, the trainer said casually, "It looked as though you were trying pretty hard that time" (Andrew and Debus, 1978, p. 157).

The social reinforcement plus token group was the same as the social reinforcement group with the exception that it added a token exchange procedure. The children received a token for each reinforcement trial. They were asked to count them and were eventually able to exchanged them for tangibles (Andrew & Debus, 1978).

Andrew and Debus (1978) found on the post-test both treatment groups attributed success and failure to effort significantly more often than the control group; however, the treatment groups were not significantly different from each other.

Supersaxo et al. (1987) found that an attributional retraining program had a positive effect on changing students' debilitating attributional responses in some situation and not in others.

Supersaxo et al. (1987) investigated if sixth grade students' attributions to success and failure would change as a result of their teachers giving written feedback on the students' tests. The teachers attempted to look at the results of the test from the students' point of view to determine if the student would think his or her test was a successful test, an average test, or a failure.

For extremely successful tests (from the student's point of view) the teacher would respond with written statements such as, but not limited to, "Look what capacities there are in you"; or, "Your ideas are substantial and inventive, as so often." For average tests (from the student's point of view), the teacher would respond with written statements such as, but not limited to, "Your ideas aren't worked out well enough here"; or, "Considering your abilities, you gave up too quickly this time." For failure tests (from the student's point of view) the teacher would respond with written statements such as, but not limited to, "Too bad you've made too little an effort this time"; or, "I'm sorry, you just didn't focus your attention enough here" (Supersaxo et al., 1987, p. 6).

He found written feedback increased attribution to ability, decreased attributions to ease of task, decreased failure attribution to ability, and found no change in failure attributions to effort (Supersaxo et al., 1987).

Supersaxo et al. (1987) like Chapin and Dyke did not identify Learned Helpless children to participant in his research project. Therefore, although the attributional retraining produced statistically significant results, it is uncertain if the same significance results would be observed with Learned Helpless children.

Reiher and Dembo (1984) found that an attributional retraining program had a positive effect on changing students' debilitating attributional responses. They believed self instructional attributional training given to seventh and eighth graders would change undesirable attributional patterns to desirable ones.

The self-instructional training was a three phase process. First, students learned to recognize and self-monitor their current thoughts regarding failure situations in two treatment groups: one focusing on intrinsic methods and self-instruction; the other focusing on extrinsic methods, externally oriented behavioristic approach. Second, they were taught to self-instruct with both effort statements and positive reinforcement. Third, they were provided academic tasks on which they could practice their new self-monitoring and self-reinforcing skills (Reiher & Dembo, 1984).

These same researchers found an attribution retraining program emphasizing effort did change students' success and

failure attributional patterns to attributions of effort. They also found that intrinsic (self instructional) and extrinsic (externally oriented behavioristic approach) self-monitoring techniques are equally successful (Reiher and Dembo, 1984).

Approximately 25% of the 90 students who began the study dropped out. Attrition was attributed to scheduling difficulties, teacher resistance, subject confusion with reference to the time and location, and illness (Reiher and Dembo, 1984). Attrition is one aspect of the study which may have biased the findings.

Allen and Dietrich (1991) found that an attributional retraining program had a positive effect on changing students' debilitating attributional responses. They investigated if certain supportive corrective instruction (i.e., peer tutoring, additional worksheets, extra help from the teacher) would change attributional patterns in ninth grade science students.

They found it was possible to change undesirable attribution patterns to desirable attributional patterns through supportive corrective instruction while encouraging students to achieve one hundred percent mastery (Allen & Dietrich, 1991).

There are two biases to internal validity that seem to be present in this study. First, reliability and validity figures were not reported for the instrument created and used by the researcher. Therefore, it is difficult to feel confident that the

instrument truly measures attributions correctly and consistently. Second, student attributional changes were measured for all students. Those with dysfunctional attributional patterns were not studied separately to see if they, as well as those with functional attributional patterns, made attributional changes. Therefore, the functional students increasing to even better levels may have raised the average of the group enough to account for the statistically significant differences.

Guskey, Benninga, and Clark (1983) found that mastery learning techniques had no effect on changing students' debilitating attributional responses.

Guskey et al. (1983) tested changes in undergraduate college students' attribution patterns after instruction using the mastery learning teaching method. Students received regular checks on their learning progress through short quizzes and "formative" tests. Students who did not achieve ninety percent mastery were given corrective activities.

Guskey et al. (1983) did not find significant differences in attributional patterns between students in the mastery learning treatment group and students in the control group. However, the test scores of students participating in the mastery learning techniques did statistically improve. Therefore, one might conclude that success only through

mastery learning techniques does not improve attributional patterns even though it seems to improve achievement.

Wilson and Linville (1982, 1985) found that an attributional retraining program seemed to improve achievement scores on standardized tests but did not change attributional patterns.

Wilson and Linville's (1982, 1985) study tested an attributional retraining program that consisted of a one time videotaped interviews with college seniors. They talked about how their GPA had improved over their four year college experience. The attribution retraining (videotaped testimonies) was intended to change attributions for performance from stable (you can depend of a repeat performance) to unstable (it may be different next time) causes. In other words, just because you got off to a rough start in college doesn't necessarily mean this will continue.

Wilson and Linville (1982, 1985) found that after attributional retraining, the student's achievement score on standardized test and their GPA improved. However, there are many things in a college student's life, such as maturation, study groups, caring professors, etc., that could account for his or her academic improvement. Since the impact of these other variables could not be eliminated, the statistically significantly

results could be a result of any one, or any combination, of the variables and not the video alone.

Perry and Penner (1990) showed that an attributional retraining program using a videotaped testimony of a college freshman benefited students with attributions to external locus of control (failures attributions to a source other than themselves).

They studied 198 college student enrolled in an introductory psychology course. Attributional retraining consisted of an eight minute color videotape in which a male psychology professor described his freshman year in college. He recounted a critical period in his college education when he was ready to drop out; but, because of the persistent urging of a friend, he remained in school and eventually continued on to graduate school.

The speaker on the tape encouraged students to persist, saying persistence (effort) is an important part of success, and that long term persistence enhances ability. He indicated that effort is not stable; it is controllable (Perry and Penner, 1990).

Perry and Penner (1990) found students who make attributions to external locus of control benefited from attributional retraining. They learned more during a lecture and made better use of study materials than they did before the training.

Students enrolled in an introductory psychology course are likely to be lower classmen. A great deal of maturity occurs during most student's freshman year. Thus, changes in achievement for these students could be attributed to maturation, rather than the testimonial. This is one aspect of the study that may have biased the findings

Connell and Kimmel (1982) found that an attributional retraining program did not change the individual's attributional patterns.

Connell and Kimmel (1982) conducted a ten day institute designed for adult women with leadership potential. They focused on organizational theory, management techniques, career development, raising aspiration, and increasing attitudes toward expanding women's roles at work and in society. Two hours of the ten-day training focused on attributional retraining. It consisted of a presentation on current attributional research, e.g., the ascription patterns of high-need achievement males and females. Participants were encouraged to analyze their attributional patterns and to make changes so that their patterns might more closely resemble those of high-need achievement males.

High-need achievement male attributional patterns were defined as: high initial expectancies for success, attributions of success to the internal and stable element ability, and failures

to lack of effort. On the other hand, female attributional patterns were defined as: lower initial expectancies for success, attribution of success to the internal, unstable element effort, and failure to lack of ability (Connell and Kimmel, 1982).

The women developed personal objectives for the institute and kept logs of their progress. They were asked to "own" their successes and analyze their failures, and then to share these attributions with another person (Connell and Kimmel, 1982).

Connell and Kimmel (1982) found their retraining efforts did not result in a shift of attributional patterns. The findings were possibly a result of a ceiling effect (most of the women attending the institute already demonstrated a desirable attributional pattern) and to the insensitivity of the instrument used to measure attributional changes. A lack of emphasis on attributional retraining (only two hours of ten days) may also explain the failure to see attributional pattern changes. Efforts were not undertaken to verify that the women at the conference viewed high-need achievement male attributional patterns as desirable. They simply may have decided that their current pattern was their pattern of choice. These aspects of the study may have biased the findings.

Appendix C

INFORMED CONSENT: INSTITUTIONAL

Purpose of this study

The purpose of this research project is to investigate what factors have influenced adult students' perspective regarding how they feel about their successful and unsuccessful learning experiences. Please sign below if you give permission for the researcher to contact academic advisors and professors in your institution to solicit help in identifying participants for this research project. The institution has no other responsibility in the research study.

Responsibilities of Institution

Once individuals who fit the research criteria have been identified, the institution will be asked to give permission for the same advisors and professors to get signed releases of information forms from the identified individuals and to give these forms showing the individual's name and phone number to the researcher.

Benefits to the Institution

The findings of the study may translate into improved achievement of adults returning to college.

Confidentiality

The name of the institution will be kept confidential. References to the institution in the research study will be as following: public and private midwestern two and four year colleges and universities.

Voluntary Permission

Your permission is completely voluntary.

Report Research Findings

If you would like a copy of the completed research project, you may request one from the researcher.

Researcher Information

The researcher is a Drake University doctoral candidate and the research project will be presented to The School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor in Education. If you have any questions about this research project, or if you would like to reach me any time during the project, I can be reached at the following numbers. Cindy Green Work: 515-225-1800, Home: 515-255-8146. Call any time.

The Faculty Advisor for this project is S. Pike Hall. His phone number is 1-515-279-3497.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

TRAINING MATERIALS

Explanation of Attribution Theory

"Attribution theorists are concerned with perceptions of causality, or the perceived reasons for a particular event's occurrence . . . It is important to note that "perceptions of causality are an ascription imposed by the perceiver; causes per se are not directly observable" (Weiner, 1989, p. 280). Perceptions of causality are constructed by the perceived because they render the environment more meaningful.

"The key to this model is the assumption that causal beliefs about success and failure experiences have important consequences for subsequent feelings, expectancies, and behavior" (Andrews & Debus, 1978, p.154).

Attribution theorists attempt to explain behavior by investigating how individuals assign responsibility for their successes and failures. These assignments, unlike performance, are not directly observable, but rather are perceptions ascribed by the perceiver.

Gage and Berliner (1988, p. 342) describe it this way: Performance is only the visible indicator of achievement motivation; it is supported by a complex system of thoughts and feelings. When we succeed or fail at a task,

we naturally think about who or what was behind our success or failure. We look to assign responsibility, to understand the causes of our performance. That is, we make attributions about who or what was responsible for how we performed.

Since observation doesn't reveal this complex system of thoughts and feelings, one must rely on the testimony of individuals who share their thoughts and feelings. An individual's testimony regarding who or what was responsible for a student's success or failure on a geography test might be as follows:

Testimony for Success

I really studied hard for the geography test.

I am good at remembering geographical facts.

The geography test was so easy.

I really got lucky today and guessed a lot of questions correctly.

Testimony for Failure

I didn't study for the geography test at all.

I am not good at remembering geographical facts.

The geography test was so difficult.

I really am unlucky today and guessed many questions incorrectly.

These ascriptions are an attempt by individuals to understand their environment. This understanding is one source of feeling good, bad, or indifferent about one's accomplishment. This understanding is translated into meaning, and thus, one is able to make prediction about subsequent consequences.

The organization of this section (Explanation of Attribution Theory) is as follows: first the discussion will be about Causal Dimensions (internal-external, stable-unstable, controllable-uncontrollable); second, Casual Antecedents, (reasons such as ability, effort, luck, and difficulty of task) that individuals use to assign meaning to their success and failures; and finally, the patterns of causality and their descriptions and consequences.

Dimensions of Causality

Attribution theory is made of three dimensions of causality: locus of control, stability, and controllability. Each dimension is defined by two opposite characteristics: locus of control has both an internal and external locus of control; stability has both a stable and unstable characteristic; controllability has both a controllable and uncontrollable characteristic.

Locus of control is composed of attributions to "internal locus of control," (i.e., personal causality, a person senses herself to be the cause) and "external locus of control," (i.e., environmental causality, a person senses something in the environment to be the cause) (Weiner, 1989; Rotter, 1975; Heider, 1958). A person can make attributions to either an internal or external locus of control.

Stability is the second dimension of causality. "Stability" is something one can depend on happening repeatedly; "unstability" is something one sees as a one-time event. (Weiner, 1986; Heider, 1958).

Controllability is the third dimension of causality. "Controllable" is the feeling of having the power to direct an event; "uncontrollable" is the feeling of not having the power to direct an event (Weiner, 1989; Heider, 1958; Rosenbaum 1972).

Casual Antecedents,

Causal Antecedents are reasons that individuals use to assign meaning to their success and failures. The four reasons most often given by individuals to interpret their successes and failures are ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck (Bar-Tal & Darom, 1979; Frieze & Snyder, 1980). A number of other reasons are also used but less frequently, such as mood, fatigue, illness, and other people (Weiner, 1989).

Researchers have found that each reason used to explain success and failure has one of the characteristics of each of the three dimensions of causality. The placement of a cause within the dimensions of causality depends upon the subjective meaning of that cause to the individual. For example, one may feel one is a lucky person (internal locus of control) or simply a victim of chance (external locus of control) (Weiner, 1989). There is, however, a general agreement among the attribution theorists of placement of causes within the dimensions of causality (Gage & Berliner, 1988) (See table C1).

Ability is considered to be an internal locus of control, stable, and not controllable. In other words, ability is an ascription to personal causality ability that dependably brings about repeated results, but is out of the control of the individual. One cannot choose one's ability; therefore, the ascription of ability is uncontrollable. However, once one understands her/his ability through personal experience (whether that understanding is realistic or not) one can depend on this perceived ability to remain constant. Thus, repeated results, whether successes or failures, will prevail (Gage & Berliner, 1988).

Effort is considered to be an internal locus of control, unstable, and controllable. In other words, effort is an ascription to personal causality, which is viewed as a one-time

event, and is in the control of the individual. One can choose one's level of effort exerted; therefore, effort is a controllable causal dimension. Since the degree of effort exerted is variable and controllable, one cannot depend on repeated results unless identical levels of effort are exerted (Gage & Berliner, 1988).

Luck is considered to be an external locus of control, unstable, and not controllable. In other words, luck is an ascription to environmental causality, which is viewed as a one-time event, but is out of the control of the individual. One cannot control "lady luck." Therefore, one never knows just how a situation will turn out. The outcome is controlled by the environment, which may bring varied results each time (Gage & Berliner, 1988).

Difficulty of task is considered to be an external locus of control, considered to be stable, and considered to be uncontrollable. In other words, difficulty of task is an ascription to environmental causality, which dependably brings about repeated results, but is out of the control of the individual. One cannot choose how difficult a task will be, but one can depend on the successful completion of an easy task and the unsuccessful completion of a difficult task (Gage & Berliner, 1988).

Table C1

The Four Most Common Reasons Ascribed to Success and Failure and Their Corresponding Dimensions of Causality.

| Ascription | Locus of Control | | Stability | | Controllability | |
|--------------|------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-------------------|---------------------|
| | Internal | External | Stable | Unstable | Control- lable | Uncon- trollable |
| Ability | X | | X | | | X |
| Effort | X | | | X | X | |
| Luck | | X | | X | | X |
| Ease of Task | | X | X | | | X |

Patterns of Casual Antecedents

Causal Antecedents are reasons that individuals use to assign meaning to their success and failures. People tend to assign responsibility for their successes and failures in two common patterns. Pattern one, also called Mastery Oriented and adaptive achievement behavior, is represented by individuals who attribute their successes to effort and ability but attribute their failures to lack of effort. Pattern two, also called Learned Helpless and maladaptive achievement behavior, is represented by individuals who attribute their successes to luck and difficulty of task but their failures to low ability (Weiner, 1989; Dweck 1986). (See Figure C1)

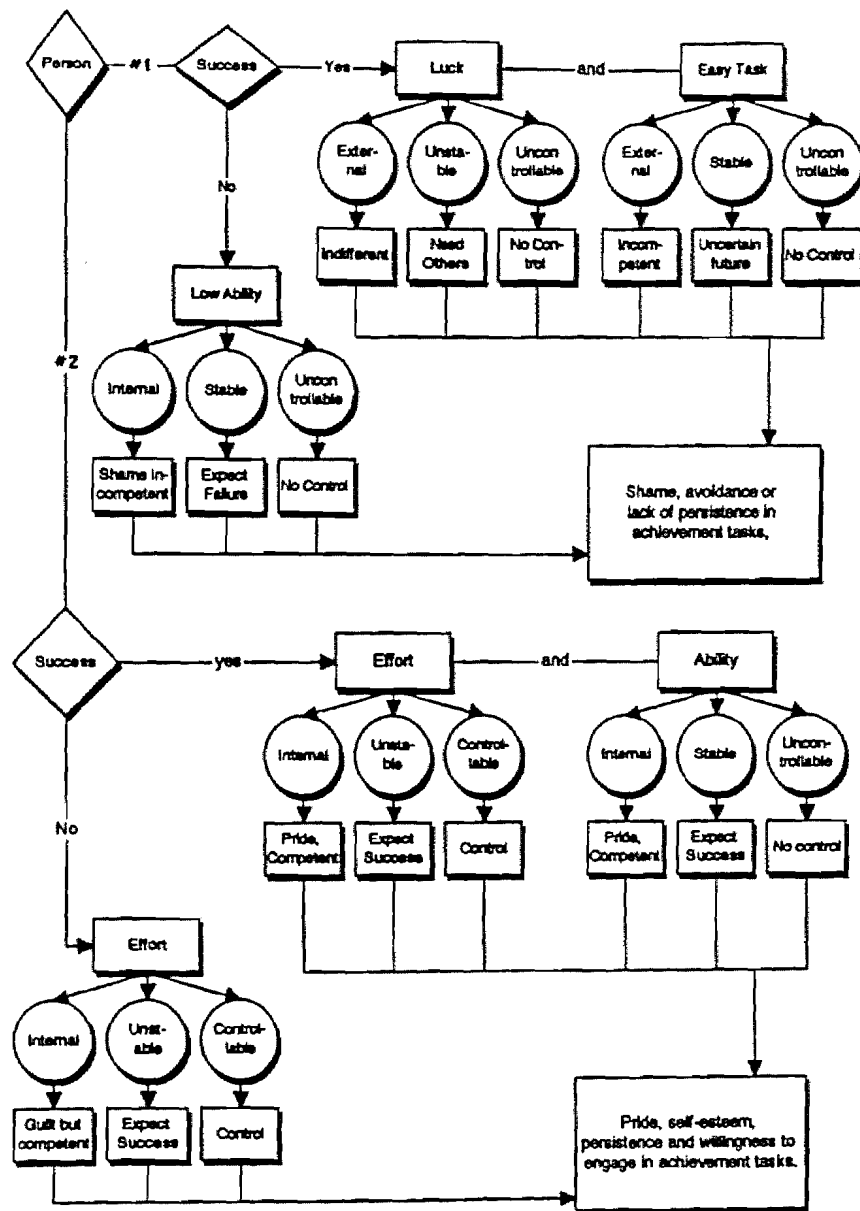


Figure C1. Learned Helpless and Mastery Oriented attributional patterns.

Summary of Mastery Oriented Individual

A Mastery Oriented individual credits her/himself (internal locus of control) for both her/his successes (effort and ability) and failures (lack of effort). Because effort and ability are internal, she feels competence and pride when she succeeds. Since she attributes her failures to effort (rather than low ability), she does not feel incompetence when she fails. Rather, she feels she just needs to try harder. Therefore, both successes and failures lead to pride, self-esteem, and persistence in both success and failure situations and a willingness to try achievement tasks again (Dweck, 1986).

Summary of Learned Helpless Individual (Pattern Two)

Failures and mistakes are a natural part of the learning process. The consequences of these failures can be either motivating or disruptive depending on how students perceive the reasons they failed. Children who routinely give up in failure situations perceive failure are a result of variables outside of their own control (Dweck, 1975). They are identified as Learned Helpless because they believe that outcome is independent of effort. They attribute failure to poor ability, to the difficulty of the task, to teacher bias, or to other forms of bad luck. They believe in spite of how hard they try the outcome will be failure. Therefore, to avoid or minimize a

sense of failure, they stop trying. If they do not try, then at least they can 'fail with honor' rather than risk uncovering additional evidence that they lack ability by trying and failing anyway (Covington & Berry, 1976).

A Learned Helpless individual credits herself for her failures (low ability that is an internal locus of control) and credits external forces (luck and easy task that are external locus of control) for her successes (Dweck, 1986). Observe the incongruity in the ascriptions of a Learned Helpless oriented individual. If she ascribes causality for her failures to internal factors (ability), would she not ascribe causality for her successes also to internal factors (ability)? (Gage & Berliner, 1988).

Because luck and difficulty of task, (ascriptions of success) and low ability (ascription of failure) are all three uncontrollable (see figure C1), a Learned Helpless individual feels she has no control over her successes or failures. She feels she is a victim of her own genetic misfortune (ability), fate (luck), or teachers who assign a difficult task (difficulty of task) (Gage & Berliner, 1988).

The dimension of stability impacts how responsibility is assigned by influencing the certainty or uncertainty of the future. Because luck is unstable, she expects to succeed or fail according to the whims of "lady luck." She is uncertain from

minute to minute whether the next achievement task will be a success or a failure. Because difficulty of task is stable, she feels certain she will only succeed when faced with an easy task, and certain she will always fail when faced with a difficult task. Because ability is stable and she feels her ability is low, she feels certain she will fail (Gage & Berliner, 1988).

Because of their maladaptive attributional patterns, Learned Helpless individuals experience shame, avoidance, and/or lack of persistence in both success and failure situations and are unwilling to attempt achievement tasks again (Gage & Berliner, 1988).

Appendix E
RELEASE OF INFORMATION
from Potential Participant to Academic Advisor and/or
Professor

I give my permission _____
(name of potential research participant) for you
_____ (name of
academic advisor or professor) to give my name and home
phone number to Cindy Green. She is conducting a research
study and can call me to explain her study.

I understand I have **not** agreed to participate in the
study. I have only agreed that my name and phone number
may be provided to Cindy Green and that she may call me and
explain the study.

The researcher is a Drake University doctoral candidate
and the research project will be presented to The School of
Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor in Education.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____

Potential Participant Name: _____

Potential Participant Phone Number: _____

Appendix F

INFORMED CONSENT: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Purpose of this study

The purpose of this research project is to investigate what factors have influenced your perspective regarding how you feel about your successful and unsuccessful learning experiences.

Responsibilities of the Participant

If you wish to participate, you will be asked to write or record (I will provide a tape recorder for your use.) a brief autobiography. Since the purpose of the autobiography is to help us get acquainted, it doesn't have to be long. Simply describe yourself however you would like to and talk about what you consider to be the highlights of your life. You may write your autobiography or use the recorder. Two or three written pages or ten to fifteen minutes of recording are enough for us to get acquainted.

You will also be asked to complete a survey called the IAR. It is a paper and pencil, multiple choice kind of survey that will help identify how you feel about your current successful and unsuccessful educational experiences. There are 34 questions. It takes about 15 minutes to complete.

You will be asked to talk with the researcher four times about your learning experiences. These sessions will take one to two hours each. We will schedule them at times and places that are convenient to you. During these times, we will talk about your perceptions of your past and present successful and unsuccessful learning experiences.

You will also be asked to keep a journal or diary of your thoughts between interviews. You may either write or record your entries. This journal is for the purpose of recording things that come to mind between the times we meet together. For example, when we meet, you may mention that you remember vividly taking a college math test and you were the only one that didn't pass it, and you chose to cut the remainder of your classes that day. After our interview, and possibly even several days later, you may recall other feelings or things that happened that day that you want to add to the information you have already reported. You will then record your thoughts and feelings and give the tape to the researcher at your next meeting.

You may find you have nothing further to report and spend no time at all recording your thoughts. You may find things do come to mind, and you may want to spend five or ten minutes recording your thoughts as they occur to you.

You will be asked to identify other people who have knowledge of your successful or unsuccessful educational experiences. It may be someone like your parents, spouse, academic advisor, or counselor. You do not have to identify anyone you don't want to. The individuals you have identified, with your consent and with their consent, will be contacted by the researcher. Once we agree which individuals to contact, you will ask each one if he or she agrees to be contacted by the researcher. If he or she agrees, she/he will sign a release of information form giving you permission to give the researcher his/her name and phone number. No one will be contacted without both your permission and their permission.

You will also be asked to discuss your changing experience with others who have experienced a like change and/or have watched an individual change. During this discussion, you will share and compare how your experiences are alike and different. You will not have to participate in the group experience to participate in the rest of the research project. Check below what you wish to do about group participation. Unless you are "hugely" against or for the idea, I would advise waiting to decide (option #3). Your feelings about participation may change during the course of the interview process. You may like the idea now and hate it later, or hate it

now and like it later. It is your choice, and you may change your choice at any time.

- _____ 1. I wish to participate in a group setting to discuss my experiences.
- _____ 2. I do not wish to participate in a group setting to discuss my experiences.
- _____ 3. I have not decided if I want to participate in a group setting to discuss my experiences. I will decide later and amend this consent form at that time.

Benefits to the Participant

I think you will enjoy reminiscing about your past learning experiences, especially when you see a chronological record of how many positive changes have occurred in your life despite some of the set backs you may be remembering.

Another benefit is that sharing your experiences can end up helping others make positive changes in their lives, as you did.

Confidentiality

Your identity will be kept confidential. A typist will be transcribing your journals and our interviews, but only first names will be used, so only the researcher will know who you are. Neither your first nor last name will appear in the final written project. Specific places, such as the name of your high school or the names of other people, such as your parents, advisor, or teacher you refer to, will NOT appear in the final written project.

You may choose the type of use to which your information is put. Check one of the uses listed below.

- _____ You may directly quote me, but not mention my name or the names of others specifically.
- _____ You may describe my situation, but you may not mention my name or the names of others specifically.
- _____ You may describe my situation in general, but not so specifically that anybody could identify me.
- _____ You may not describe my situation at all. It is for your information only. You may only use it to draw conclusions about the study.

You may change the type of permission you are giving at any time during the project. In other words, if you initially choose "you may directly quote me" and later change your mind, you may amend the form crossing off this original choice and making a new choice.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation is completely voluntary. Should you decide during the project you no longer wish to continue your participation, you may stop at any time; you are under no obligation to complete the project. You may withdraw at any time.

Should you choose to participate at any level, choose not to participate at all, or choose to discontinue your participation, your status in school or your academic standing will not be affected.

Report Research Findings

Once the project is finished, we will meet one last time so we can discuss the finding of this project. This meeting will take about one hour. I will also give you a photo copy of the final project.

Researcher Information

The researcher is a Drake University doctoral candidate and the research project will be presented to The School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor in Education. If you have any questions about this research project, or if you would like to reach me any time during the project, I can be reached at the following numbers. Cindy Green Work: 515-225-1800, Home: 515-255-8146. Call any time.

The Faculty Advisor for this project is S. Pike Hall. His phone number is 1-515-279-3497.

Please sign below, if you wish to be a part of the project.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Witness _____

Date: _____

Appendix G
AUTOBIOGRAPHY GUIDELINES

Please dictate an autobiography of yourself. Include:

Name:

Address:

Phone (both work and home):

Age:

Marital status: How long

Children: How many, ages, gender.

Are you employed? Where, for how long? What kinds of
jobs have you had since high school?

High School

Where did you go to high school?

When did you graduate?

Favorite subject, why.

Least favorite subject, why.

Approximate GPA.

Tell me about a successful high school experience. Why
was it successful?

Tell me about an unsuccessful high school experience.
Why was it unsuccessful?

Did you go on to college after high school?

If no, why not?

If yes, where did you go and when?

Why did you decide to go to college?

What did you take?

How did you do?

How long did you go?

Did you drop out? If yes, when and why?

Why are you back in college now?

When did you come back to college?

What are you taking?

How are things going in school?

Are they going better than you thought, why, why not?

What else can you tell me that would help me understand your educational experiences, both past and present?

Appendix H

Accuracy of Historical Memories

The accuracy of memories may be questionable. One need only listen to family stories at a holiday gathering to see the differences in each person's report of the events. However, the importance of accurately remembering an anecdote for fun with relatives is not as important as remembering accurately past experiences from which one forms current attitudes and behaviors.

When a researcher uses past events as a source of data for a research project, the researcher must be concerned about how accurately one remembers these past events.

Research has relied heavily on retrospective reports for evidence of the impact of the past upon the present. "From the time of Freud, retrospective reports have provided much of the substance in studies concerned with the role of early experiences" (Field, 1981, p. 1). Similarly, Field (1981) says in her research on the retrospective reports of the elderly that researchers have necessarily placed considerable faith in data collection . . . through recollections and reminiscence" (Field, 1981, p. 1).

Mead (1992) looked at retrospective reports of teachers. He compares these reports, which he called 'teacher tales' (remembrances of a teacher's personal learning experiences in

school), to the teacher's present practices and beliefs. He deals with the accuracy of the teacher's recall by saying, "The details I am unable to recall from 30 years ago do not detract from the utility of the story. . . . The significance [of a retrospective tale] does not lie in speculating whether it happened but in what it tells the listener about my present belief." He goes on to say, "whether the informants report the past with veracity is immaterial. Instead, these teacher tales represent accurate reports of present beliefs and attitudes." In other words, interpretation is reality.

Field (1981) says we know very little about the retrospective report, including its accuracy. She says, "only a longitudinal study, in which the retrospective reports can be verified against data collected at earlier times, can determine what topics tend to be reported accurately" (p. 2).

There have been only a few studies concerning the accuracy of retrospective reports (Field, 1979). Most of these deal with the reports of mothers about their young children (Douglas & Blomfield, 1956; Pyles, Stolz, & Macfarlane, 1935; Yarrow, Campbell, & Burton, 1970) or the retrospection of young adults (Cherry & Rodgers, 1979; Livson & McNeill, 1962; Weishaus, 1980) or the memory of the elderly on public events (Squire, 1974), public faces (Warrington & Sanders, 1971), objects in common use (Poon & Fozard, 1978), or events of

limited personal significance (Baddeley, Lewis, & Nimmo-Smith, 1979; Gekoski & Kerrigan, 1980).

All of these studies have found inaccuracies in the memory of individuals over time. "Factual information is recollected with more consistency than attitudinal information. Many studies found a directional shift as well, for information was recalled as 'better' than it in fact had been: the baby walked and talked earlier" (Field, 1981, p. 2).

There seems to be little support for the accuracy of retrospective memory. Since there is little support for the accuracy of memories in the literature and since the accuracy of memories is a concern of this study, it is necessary to look at ways to validate the accuracy. This validation can occur through triangulation (verification by other stakeholders) and using the hermeneutic methodology (creating and recreating, analyzing and reanalyzing, evaluating and reevaluating). One must also remember, Rogers (1957) believes that how people see things is, for them, the only reality.

Summary

We cannot be absolutely certain that research participants will remember past events one hundred percent accurately. In fact, we cannot say with any certainty what

percentage of past memories are accurate. Field, Mead, and other researchers would agree with this statement.

Even though this sounds as though we have little reason to believe anything recounted from the past, it would be as illogical to discount all past reported memories as completely inaccurate as it would be to accept all past reported memories as completely accurate. Somewhere between all and nothing lies a useful source of first hand information from an individual's personal history. This useful information is uncovered through the hermeneutic process.

There is no doubt that as we search for explanations of events, the greater our pool of information the more rational our explanation will be. Time, maturity, experience, all contribute to a greater information pool for us to use to explain events.

Can we be totally certain that the events reported by individuals are accurate or can we be totally certain interpretations of past experiences have not changed? No we cannot. However, recollections are the only way the researcher has to learn first hand of the individuals' past histories. Although this method is not flawless, it is the best tool available. When it is combined with the retrospective reports of others who were "there" and treated by means of the hermeneutic process, the knowledge learned becomes stronger.

Appendix I
RELEASE OF INFORMATION
From Participant for Other Stakeholders

I give my permission _____
(name of research participant) for Cindy Green to contact
_____ (name of
stakeholder) regarding his or her contribution to this research
study. I understand he or she will be discussing his or her
perceptions of his or her successful and unsuccessful learning
experiences and any and all other topics that he or she feels
are relative to this.

I specifically request that these topics derived from my
interview not be mentioned by the researcher.

The researcher is a Drake University doctoral candidate
and the research project will be presented to The School of
Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor in Education.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____

Appendix J
RELEASE OF INFORMATION
from Potential Stakeholder to Participating
Stakeholder

I give my permission _____
(name of potential research stakeholder) for you
_____ (name of
research participant) to give my name and home phone
number to Cindy Green as a possible participant in her research
study.

I understand I have **not** agreed to participate in the
study. I have only agreed that my name and phone number
may be provided to Cindy Green and that she may call me and
explain the study.

The researcher is a Drake University doctoral candidate
and the research project will be presented to The School of
Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor in Education.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____

Name of Potential Participant: _____

Phone Number of Potential Participant: _____

Appendix K

INFORMED CONSENT: STAKEHOLDERS

Purpose of this study

The purpose of this research project is to investigate what factors have influenced an individual's perspective regarding how he/she feels about his/her successful and unsuccessful learning experiences.

Responsibilities of the Participant

You will be asked to talk with the researcher twice about the learning experiences of one the research participants. These sessions will take one to two hours each. We will schedule them at times and places that are convenient to you. During these times, we will talk about your perceptions of this individual's past and present successful and unsuccessful learning experiences.

You will also be asked to keep a journal or diary of your thoughts between interviews. This journal is for the purpose of recording things that come to mind between the times we meet together. For example, after our interview, and possibly even several days later, you may remember information you want to add to the information you have already reported. You will then jot down these thoughts and feelings in your journal and

give it to the researcher at our next meeting. You may find that you have nothing further to report and thus not spend any time writing in your journal. You may find that things do come to mind, and thus, you may want to spend ten to fifteen minutes as these thoughts occur recording them in your journal.

You will also be asked to discuss the individual's changes you have witnessed with others who have had similar experiences. During this discussion you will share and compare how your experiences are alike and different. You do not have to participate in the group experience to participate in the rest of the research project. Check below what you wish to do about group participation. Unless you are "hugely" against or for the idea, I would advise waiting to decide (option #3). Your idea about participation may change during the course of the interview process. You may like the idea now and hate it later, or hate it now and like it later. It is your choice and you may change your choice at any time.

- _____ 1. I wish to participate in a group setting to discuss my experiences.
- _____ 2. I do not wish to participate in a group setting to discuss my experiences.

- _____ 3. I have not decided if I want to participate in a group setting to discuss my experiences. I will decide later and amend this consent form at that time.

Benefits to the Participant

A benefit of participating in this research project is the contribution that sharing your experiences can have to help others make positive changes in their lives.

Confidentiality

Your identity will be kept confidential. A typist will be transcribing your journals and our interviews, but only first names will be used so only the researcher will know who you are. Neither your first nor last name will appear in the final written project. Specific places or the names of other people, such as students, advisors, or teachers, will NOT appear in the final written project.

You may choose the type of use to which your information is put. Check one of the uses listed below.

- _____ You may directly quote me, but not mention my name or the names of others specifically.

- _____ You may describe my situation, but you may not mention my name or the names of others specifically.
- _____ You may describe my situation in general, but not so specifically that anybody could identify me.
- _____ You may not describe my situation at all. It is for your information only. You may only use it to draw conclusions about the research study.

You may change your level of confidentiality at any time during the project. In other words, if you initially choose "you may directly quote me" and later change your mind, you may amend the form crossing off this original choice and making a new choice.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation is completely voluntary. Should you decide during the project you no longer wish to continue your participation, you may stop at any time; you are under no obligation to complete the project. You may withdraw at any time.

Should you choose to participate at any level, choose not to participate at all, or choose to discontinue your participation,

the participant's status in school or his/her academic standing will not be affected.

Report Research Findings

Once the project is finished you may request a photo copy of the final project.

Researcher Information

The researcher is a Drake University doctoral candidate and the research project will be presented to The School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor in Education. If you have any questions about this research project, or if you would like to reach me any time during the project, I can be reached at the following numbers. Cindy Green Work: 515-225-1800, Home: 515-255-8146. Call any time.

The Faculty Advisor for this project is S. Pike Hall. His phone number is 1-515-279-3497.

Please sign below, if you wish to be a part of the project.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Witness _____

Date: _____

Appendix L
INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

1. When did they graduate from high school?
2. When did they first begin college?
3. How long did they first attend college?
4. How did they first leave college?
5. When did they re-enroll in college?
6. How many re-enrollment have they had?
7. What are the dates (From this determine length of time between re-enrollments)?
8. Reasons for their current college enrollment?
9. A personal assessment of how they are doing in college currently (Success and failure attributions).
10. Reasons for their traditional matriculation in college.
11. A personal assessment of how they did in college during their traditional college experience (Success and failure attributions).
12. A personal assessment of how they did in high school. (Success and failure attributions). Also GPA, ACT.

Appendix M

Table M1

Protection of the Rights of Research Participants.

| Title of Form | Who gets the form signed | Who Signs the Form | Who benefits from the Protection |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Informed Consent: Institutional | Researcher | Representative of Institution | <u>Institution</u> <u>Researcher</u> |
| Release of Information: from Potential Participant to Academic Advisor and/or Professor | Academic Advisor and/or Professor | Potential Participant | <u>Academic Advisor</u> <u>Professor</u> <u>Institution</u> <u>Potential Participant</u> <u>Researcher</u> |
| Informed Consent: Research Participant | Researcher | Research Participant | <u>Participant</u> <u>Researcher</u> |
| Release of Information: from Potential Stakeholder to Participating Stakeholder | Research Participant | Potential Stakeholder | <u>Research Participant</u> <u>Potential Stakeholder</u> <u>Researcher</u> |

| Title of Form | Who gets the form signed | Who Signs the Form | Who benefits from the Protection |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Release of Information: from Participant for Other Stakeholders | Researcher | Research Participant | <u>Research Participant</u> <u>Potential Stakeholder</u> <u>Researcher</u> |
| Informed Consent: Stakeholders | Researcher | Potential Stakeholder | <u>Potential Stakeholder</u> <u>Researcher</u> |

Appendix N
Learned Helpless and Mastery Oriented
Indepth Analysis for each participant

Jason

Included in this section are coding and in-depth explanations to help the reader identify Learned Helpless issues in the vignettes and relate them to Learned Helpless Theory. Once the reader becomes familiar with the Learned Helpless identifying process, the coding will no longer be necessary; therefore, it is provided only in Jason's verification of Learned Helplessness and Mastery Orientation.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Jason believed he did not have the ability to succeed. The following are vignettes from his life that provide evidence that he believed he failed because of lack of ability, which is an internal factor, and succeeded because of an easy college, luck, etc., which are external factors.

He initially formed the opinion that he lacked ability in elementary school, but he continued to verify this throughout his educational experiences. He attended a private grade school with rigorous entrance requirements. He felt he was "barely" making it. He said "I felt like everyone was smarter

than me. I felt I was running to catch up. I felt out of breath like I just made it by the skin of my teeth." He believed he did not have the ability (internal focus) to perform on a equal academic plane (failure) with his peers. He compared his scores (failure) to his peers' scores, and if he did not receive the highest score, he perceived that he failed because of his inability (internal focus). This demonstrates that he believed he failed because he lacked ability (an internal focus explaining failure) to earn the highest score in the class. He also felt inadequate (an internal focus explaining failure) to compete with the other students in his class.

He continued to feel he lacked ability throughout his high school years and his first three years of college. In high school he felt criticized (perceived failure) by his teachers for his best efforts. He rationalized that he was criticized because of his inability (internal focus explaining failure) to perform work that would not earn criticism. His first year of college his grades were poor (perceived failure) but passing. This provided to him additional proof of his inability (internal focus explaining failure) to earn passing grades.

His grades were excellent (success) his second year of college, but he rationalized they were earned at a community college which was an easier school (external factor explaining success) than the college where he earned poor grades his

freshman year. Because he believed his success was a result of an easier college (external factor explaining success) rather than a result of his ability (internal factor), his success did not contradict his perception of his inability (internal factor).

His third year of college was at a university he again perceived as rigorous, and consequently he believed he could not succeed because he lacked ability (internal focus explaining failure). Although his transcripts showed he was doing average work that year in college, he believed he was failing. Jason defined academic achievements as earning "A's." Since he did not get "A's," he believed he did not have the ability (an internal focus explaining failure) to be successful. He eventually dropped out of college and took a manual labor job (perceived failure) believing this job was all his ability would enable him to obtain.

These are just a few examples from Jason's life that illustrate his perceptions of his successes and failures. He consistently demonstrated by his perceptions about his life experiences that he believed he failed because he lacked ability and succeeded because of external factors. This contributes to an accumulation of evidence that demonstrates that he was Learned Helpless in the past.

Perception of Control

Jason routinely believed he did not have control over the choices in his life. In reality his parents and grandparents made many of his choices, and he didn't think he could assert his personal wishes. The following are vignettes from his life-story that demonstrate that he believed he did not have control over circumstances in his life.

Jason's parents made the decision he would go to college, rather than technical school, which really interested him. His parents felt he was "too smart" to pursue a technical occupation. His grandmother chose the college he would attend his freshman year. After a poor academic performance, his parents decided he would attend a community college his sophomore year and decided he would attend a four year university his junior year. Jason obediently followed each decision his parents and grandparents made for him. He indicated he did not believe he had any other options. This illustrates that Jason believed he did not have personal options (lack of control) at this point in this life.

When he felt unsuccessful in school after his junior year, he decided to drop out of college. He believed this was the only solution to his academic problems. After he dropped out, he did not have the support or guidance of his family. Therefore, he was, for the first time, making important decisions

independently. Since he was inexperienced at decision-making, and did not know how to look at options and make wise choices, he believed his only employment option was a manual labor job, something that did not require skill or ability. Again he felt he had no other choice.

These are just a few examples from Jason's life-story that demonstrate he felt he did not have control over his life circumstances. This consistent demonstration of lack of control contributes to an accumulation of evidence that he was Learned Helpless in the past.

Perceptions of Positive Outcome and Effort Independence

Jason viewed outcome and effort as independent of each other. He believed his best effort in elementary school produced inferior scores in comparison to his peers. He also believed his best efforts in high school produced teacher criticism.

Jason's perceived lack of success, in spite of his perceived best effort, seemed to discourage a belief in a link between effort and outcome. His best efforts produced criticism and imperfect scores; thus, he reasoned, effort did not produce success.

These are just a few examples from Jason's life that show he believed outcome and effort were independent. He

consistently demonstrated that he did not see a relationship between outcome and effort. This contributes to an accumulation of evidence that demonstrates that he was Learned Helpless in the past.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Jason's response to his failures was to quit trying and to feel humiliated that he failed. He felt humiliation because he felt he lacked the ability to succeed. To minimize the pain of humiliation, he quit trying. He said, "I just got tired of it [failing]. I just did enough to get by, then I didn't have to deal with it." He managed to continue passing with little effort until his freshman year of college. At this time his lack of effort earned for him poor grades, and his parents did not permit him to return to this college his sophomore year. Although he really didn't want to return, he was humiliated to leave on these terms.

After Jason's junior year, he gave up and dropped out of college. At this point he was so certain of his inabilities that he felt a manual labor job was all he could qualify for. He did not try again to succeed academically until he returned to college a few years later, or to succeed again personally until he got married and became a father.

These are just a few examples from Jason's life that show his response to his success and failures. He consistently demonstrated that he experienced shame and humiliation in the face of failure. This contributes to an accumulation of evidence that demonstrates that he was Learned Helpless in the past.

Summary of Jason's Learned Helplessness

Jason consistently demonstrated in the telling of his life-story that he believed he lacked the ability to succeed, that he believed he did not have control over his life, and that he did not see a relationship between outcome and effort. To avoid feelings of humiliation and shame after failing, he simply quit trying. This demonstrates that Jason was Learned Helpless in the past. His Learned Helpless state continued until approximately his early twenties.

Paula

Paula's Verification of Past Learned Helplessness

The following section provides a summary of the evidence from Paula's life-story that enabled the researcher to identify her as Learned Helpless.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Paula felt she did not have the ability to succeed personally or academically. The following are vignettes from her life that provide evidence that she believed she failed because of lack of ability and succeeded because of external forces.

Paula had not been confident of her academic ability since first grade. She struggled to catch up after a two-month illness and felt as if she was behind throughout the rest of her educational experience. She was retained in second grade and she felt humiliation, saying, "I just always remember feeling like just kind of dumb and not feeling very good about myself because everyone knew I got held back."

Paula struggled in high school and did not feel as if she had earned her high school diploma. She was permitted to participate in graduation ceremonies one credit short, which was confirmation to her that she lacked the ability to "really" graduate in spite of the fact that she did finish the following summer.

Paula did not feel she was worthy to receive "caring" from others. The summer after high school graduation, her high school counselor took her to high school completion classes on Saturday morning. Sometimes he arrived to pick her up to find her sleeping in, and he would have to insist she get up and

go to class. Others described this counselor as extremely caring but Paula described him as " just doing his job. He was just a caring person. He was intrigued by my life." She was not being ungrateful; she truly believed she was not worthy of this kindness so explained it with external justifications.

She also felt she was a personal failure because she was part of a dysfunctional family, because of her chemical dependency problems, and because of a decision she made to have an abortion. These perceived failures were confirmation to Paula that she did not have the ability to succeed personally.

Perception of Control

Paula routinely felt she did not have control over the her life. One example is she felt trapped in a dysfunctional family. Her physical needs were met, but her emotional needs were not met. Paula felt she had no choices. She indicated her mother had told her that in spite of her home situation that she could make appropriate choice. However, Paula indicated she did not see this as an option. She said "I'm not trying to put the blame anywhere, but it's your house, it's where you live. You have nowhere to go. I didn't pick that situation, I didn't pick my parents. They gave birth to me; that's where I'm at. That's my life."

Perceptions of Positive Outcome and Effort Independence

Paula viewed outcome and effort as independent of each other. She was preoccupied with her family situation and it took all her effort just to survive emotionally. She was drained of strength and thus was able to exert much effort in achievement situations. Because she never intentionally tried to achieve, she did not associate effort with success. She said, "I just thought it [failure] was expected. I didn't expect any more or any less."

Responses to Successes and Failures

Paula responded to failure situations in her life by giving up. Because she did not see a relationship between outcome and effort, she did not intentionally try to achieve academically for many years. She felt embarrassment and shame, embarrassed to be retained in second grade and to fail academically throughout her life. She also felt shame when hospitalized for chemical dependence and for a decision she made to have an abortion.

Summary of Paula's Learned Helplessness

Paula consistently demonstrated in the telling of her life-story that she believed she lacked the ability to succeed academically or personally. She believed she could not change

her ability or gain control over her family situation. Since she did not see a relationship between outcome and effort, she did not feel that anything she did would correct the situation. To avoid feelings of humiliation and shame after failing, she simply quit trying. This demonstrates that Paula was Learned Helpless in the past. This continued until approximately her early twenties.

Paula's Verification of Current Mastery Orientation

The following section provides a summary of the evidence from Paula's history that enabled the researcher to identify her as currently Mastery Oriented.

Paula began to make the transition to Mastery Oriented in her early twenties when she began to believe in and trust her ability. As a result of her new perception of herself, when she was freed from family turmoil, she could realistically view her ability. She also gave birth to her daughter and was responsibly providing for her. She began to focus on her studies, to work hard, and to succeed. This gave her evidence that she had ability and that effort and outcome were mutually dependent. When she consistently was able to trust her ability, to take control of her life, to recognize the relationship between outcome and effort, and to persist even in difficult situations, the transition to Mastery Orientation was complete.

Some of the evidence that Paula is current Mastery Oriented is found in her current perceptions of recent successes and failures and some of the evidence is found in her new perceptions of her past successes and failures. Even though she is just 26 and does not have years of experiences to use as illustrations of her new perceptions, her new perceptions clearly demonstrate that she is Mastery Oriented.

Perception of Successes and Failures Relative to Ability

Paula has a new perception of her abilities. During her pregnancy she lived with a single woman and her three children. This woman provided Paula with a comfortable home, a pleasant environment, structure and guidance, and a close friendship. Paula loved her, loved living in her home, and flourished under her nurturance. For the first time in her life she lived in a peaceful environment.

Paula was working part-time and going to college part time. She was focused, she was studying, and was getting the best grades in her life. Paula said, "I kicked butt." She was beginning to recognize that she had the ability to be successful in her endeavors whether personal or academic.

She continued her success after her baby was born. She continued in college, she continued to work, and she continued

to care for her child. Her attitudes about her ability have become consistently positive.

Perception of Control

Paula began to take control of her life at about the age of eighteen or nineteen. She currently perceives she has control over her personal and academic circumstances and has a new view of control issues from the past.

Paula indicated that as a child she felt trapped in her family situation. She indicates that as she looks back, she remembers friends who also lived in difficult home situations and did not react as she did by using drugs or alcohol. She now recognizes that this was a choice she made. She said, "I thought I had no choices; now I realize I made choices and the wrong ones."

Paula has taken control of her life. Her first independent adult decision was to continue her pregnancy and rear her child. At this time she made a number of choices that helped her take control of her life. She chose to accept help from Catholic Social Services, she chose to go to college part-time, and she chose to work part-time. She has continued her pattern of wise choices. She works full-time for a major insurance company, is completing an Associates of Arts degree, and will soon become a full time nursing student.

Perceptions of Outcome and Effort Dependence

Paula now views outcome and effort as mutually dependent. Paula began to see that if she worked hard the outcome was usually good. She studied for the first time in college and was getting "A's" and "B's," she was successfully providing for her child, and she viewed her graduation from high school as having been earned by her own effort.

Paula indicated she now recognizes that she was the one who was responsible for finishing fifteen of the sixteen credits necessary for graduation. She indicated that at the time she was focusing on the one hour she was short but now focuses on the fifteen she had finished.

Paula began to see the relationship between outcome and effort when she was experiencing success on the job and in college and while pregnant with her daughter. She spent evenings studying and practicing her typing. She began to associate success and effort for the first time.

Paula also indicated that she was successfully caring for her child. She said, "I was feeding her, bathing her, getting her back and forth to day care, clothing her. I was doing it." She indicated caring for a child is a lot harder than she thought it would be, but that she was succeeding. She was beginning to understand the relationship between outcome and effort.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Paula is feeling confident in her abilities and demonstrating her confidence by persevering in the face of difficult situations.

The most recent example of a difficult situation is of Paula's attitude toward her ability is that she was recently terminated from her job. She could have given up at that point. She could have placed blame on many external and uncontrollable forces, but she did not. She could have believed she simply doesn't have the ability to hold a professional position. She did not believe that either. She took responsibility for what happened, made a pledge to prevent it from happening again, and is working temporary jobs while looking for a new permanent job. Paula feels pride in her accomplishments, but is not allowing this set back to prevent her from persisting in positive endeavors.

Summary of Paula's Verification of Mastery Orientation

Paula consistently demonstrates in the telling of her current life-story that she is confident in her abilities. She feels proud of her personal and academic successes, and particularly proud of her success as a mother. She has taken control of her life and is making wise choices for herself. She recognizes that it is through her own hard work that she is

successful and continues to work toward completing an Associates of Arts Degree. This demonstrates that Paula is currently Mastery Oriented.

Jane

Jane's Verification of Past Learned Helplessness

The following section provides a summary of the evidence from Jane's life-story that enabled the researcher to identify her as Learned Helpless.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Jane felt she didn't have the ability to succeed. She saw herself as a failure as a family member, she felt she was a failure academically, and she felt she was a failure professionally. The following are vignettes from her life that provide evidence that she believed she failed because of lack of ability and succeeded because of external forces.

Jane viewed herself as an inadequate family member. Because she was not what her parents expected and could not change that, she felt she failed to fulfill her role in the family.

Jane had a difficult time in elementary school, especially with reading and math. Because she struggled, performing poorly on daily work, she determined she lacked ability. She also compared her average grades to the excellent grades of

her sisters. Her sisters received praise from her parents, their teachers, and their peers for their excellent academic performance. Jane did not receive such praise and surmised that praise is only given to those who have the ability to do excellent work. She didn't get the same praise, so she believed she had inferior ability.

Jane compared herself not only to her sisters, but also to her peers. In high school her immediate group of friends were taking advanced classes while she was taking, as she describes it, "classes with the dummies."

Jane indicates she "flunked out" of college. In reality she failed one class and passed three. However, she viewed the situation as a total failure. Failing one class was additional evidence to her that she did not have the ability for college. She was totally focused on the failure and did not see her three successful classes, so was not able to amend her perception of her ability.

Jane took her first job as a secretary shortly after she dropped out of college. She was terminated from his job for excessive absences. Despite severance-counseling, she felt she was fired because she didn't have the ability to do the work.

Perception of Control

Jane felt she did not have control over her life. The most prominent roles Jane played while growing up were those of child and student. She felt helpless to play either of these roles adequately. She could not be the twin or the son her parents expected, and she could not be the quality of student she expected herself to be.

Perceptions of Positive Outcome and Effort Independence

Jane viewed outcome and effort as independent of each other. When asked if she ever worked for a grade of "A" or "B" she said, "What for? I couldn't have done it." Convinced that she didn't have the ability to do well academically, she saw no value in trying. When she was fired from her first professional secretarial job for poor job attendance, she reasoned the termination was for lack of ability. She did see the relationship between attendance (effort) and continued employment (success).

Responses to Successes and Failures

Jane's response to her failure was to quit trying. She also felt shame because she believed she lacked ability. When Jane had to recite in school, she viewed her performance as so poor that she experienced humiliation. She felt she didn't have the

ability to do better, nor did she feel extra effort would produce better results. She said, "I thought I could never get better [grades] than I did, so I just didn't bother to try." She learned to get by through minimal effort. She said, "I figured out by then that I could stay out of trouble if I kept my mouth shut and handed in my homework. So I did. That's all I did."

Summary of Jane's Learned Helplessness

Jane consistently demonstrated in the telling of her life-story that she believed she lacked the ability to succeed academically or personally. She felt she could not change her ability or change herself in order to fit into her family of origin. Since she did not see a relationship between outcome and effort, she felt there was nothing she could do to correct the situation. Therefore, she gave up in the face of failure. This demonstrates that Jane was Learned Helpless in the past. Her Learned Helpless state continued until approximately her early thirties.

Jane's Verification of Current Mastery Orientation

The following section provides a summary of the evidence from Jane's history that enabled the researcher to identify her as currently Mastery Oriented.

Jane began to make the transition in her early thirties when she began to believe in and trust her ability. As a result of her new perception of herself, she began to look at some of her old belief systems differently. She began to acknowledge the past successes she had ignored and began to believe in her ability. When she was consistently able to trust her ability, take control of her life, recognize the relationship between outcome and effort, and persist even in difficult situations, the transition to Mastery Orientation was complete.

Some of the evidence that Jane is currently Mastery Oriented is found in her current perceptions of recent successes and failures, and some of the evidence is found in her new perceptions of her past successes and failures.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Jane has a new perception of her abilities. As she reviewed her feelings regarding her ability, she indicated that she is now a competent and capable woman and was probably a competent and capable child and young adult as well, but at the time she "just didn't recognize it."

Jane has revised her perceptions of her sisters' abilities and the attention they received as children. She realizes that they all had the same difficulties growing up and have similar difficulties as adults. With this new realization, she is able to

see that the pedestal of perfectionist upon which she had placed her sisters on was irrational. She also believes her parents were probably unaware of her feelings toward the attention her sisters received.

Jane also has a new perception of her academic endeavors as a young student. She still recalls public recitation and classroom games as horrible experiences, but also recognizes that many of the children loved these activities and looked forward to them as a treat. She acknowledges that the teacher was probably trying to reinforce learning with fun activities, not trying to humiliate her.

Jane also has changed her view of her single semester at college. While going through the community college admissions process, she had the opportunity to see her New York University transcripts. She said she was surprised to find that she had failed only one class and got "C's" in three other classes. She remembered feeling she had "flunked out," but now realizes that she really did "pretty well."

She also has a different view of being fired from her job. She admits she did have excessive absences and recognizes that regular attendance is important to employers. She now knows that she wasn't fired for her lack of ability, but for poor attendance.

Jane is working towards an Associate of Arts Degree from a community college. She is doing very well. She says, "I guess I knew I could do it; I just needed to prove it to myself." She recognizes that she does have the ability to be successful in college and probably always has. She said, "I didn't know I could do it. I guess I probably could have; I just didn't know it."

She feels successful as a wife and mother. She indicates that she feels like a capable and competent woman and recognizes this is why she is successful both personally and academically.

Perception of Control

Jane spent the first thirty years of her life believing her life circumstances were out of her control. She currently feel she has control over her personal and academic circumstances and has a new view of past control issues.

Jane recognizes that although she could not change her gender or the fact that she was a single birth, she didn't lack value as a family member. She indicates she realizes that her parents and others didn't view her as inferior; she just thought they did. She indicates she feels she is and was an unique and valuable person.

Jane also recognizes that when she was in grade school her reading and math difficulties were probably the result of a learning disability that was undiagnosed. She indicates this probably contributed to her feelings of lacking control in her personal learning experiences. Jane now takes control of her personal learning experience by accepting help with her study skills at the community college learning center.

Perceptions of Outcome and Effort Dependence

Jane now views outcome and effort as mutually dependent. This is evidenced by her new attitude toward effort and outcome in her past and the effort she intentionally invests in success currently.

Jane was terminated from her first career secretarial position at the age of nineteen. She felt at the time she lacked the ability to do the job. Now she realizes her termination was a result of her lack of effort to go to work daily, not her lack of ability.

Jane is working hard at the community college and earning excellent grades. She attributes her success to hard work and wise choices.

Jane also recognizes that successful families don't just happen; they result from making the family the first priority and investing the necessary effort.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Jane is feeling confident in her abilities and demonstrates her confidence by consistent effort and pride in her accomplishments. She recognizes that her old feelings of inability and lack of control were debilitating to the point that she just quit trying. She feels if she had persisted, she could have been successful. She indicates she has occasionally had difficulty with her present studies and might have been tempted to quit if she had not felt confident in her ability. She indicates that she feels a great deal of pride in her achievements in college and in her life in general.

Summary of Jane's Verification of Mastery Orientation

Jane began to recognize her potential in her early thirties. With that came two major realizations. The first was that she had value because she is a unique individual. She also realizes she had untapped abilities. With these realizations came a new perception of her successes and failures. She learned that her failures were not a result of inability, but rather the result of lack of effort, while her successes were a result of her ability.

Jane consistently demonstrated in the telling of her current life-story that she is confident in her abilities. She feels proud of her success in her marriage and family and in

her college studies. She has taken control of her life and is making wise choices for herself. She recognizes that it is through her own hard work that she is successful. This demonstrates that Jane is currently Mastery Oriented.

Larry

Larry's Verification of Past Learned Helplessness

The following section provides a summary of the evidence from Larry's life-story that enabled the researcher to identify him as Learned Helpless.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Larry felt he didn't have the ability to succeed personally or academically. The following are vignettes from his life that provide evidence that he believed he failed because of lack of ability and succeeded because of external forces.

He initially formed this opinion at the age of seven or eight after he was taken from his mother and adopted by an abusive aunt and uncle. He felt he did not have the ability to be successful as a member of his adopted family. He continued to feel he did not have the ability to succeed in school, in college, or in wrestling. He attributed his successes to external forces, but his failures to his inability.

Larry did well academically all through school. Larry indicated he was afraid to fail, fearing severe punishment, including beatings. Despite achieving well academically, he never attributed his success to his own ability; rather he felt he succeeded in order to avoid punishment.

When Larry transferred to a new high school his senior year, he judged it to be more difficult academically. He indicates, "I got by because I was a senior, and you kind of get that senior push. Teachers don't want seniors to fail." He attributed his academic success to an external focus: teachers not wanting seniors to fail. Larry participated in a school-work program his senior year of high school. His perception was that this program was for students who, "were not college material" and attributed his success to an "easy program."

Larry has achieved recognition in wrestling through his representation of the United States, competing against teams from Japan, Korea, and other countries. As an All American in wrestling, he won several regional Olympic trials and trained with the Olympic team in Colorado Springs, Hawaii, and West Point. When asked if he felt as if he were a successful wrestler during the time he was competing internationally, he replied, "No, I didn't win a gold medal in the Olympics." He was searching for external validation of his ability.

Larry reports that he got "C's" and "B's" in college as a freshman and sophomore. He says, "I didn't do too hot. I wasn't focused. I didn't have good study habits, especially at first. [Name of college] was a nurturing environment. The professors were good to you." He reports his grades were a result of the efforts of others, the professors in a nurturing environment, the coaches, etc., but not a result of his own ability.

Larry also reports that he was academically ineligible to wrestle in college his junior and senior years. He did not have financial support from his family and felt he needed to work long hours for school expenses, spending money, and board and room during school holidays. (He was not able to spend holidays with his family.) Larry reports he felt he was failing because of his inabilities. He says, "I felt I really didn't have business being in college anyway. I felt I just wasn't sharp enough. My high school advisor told me not to go to college."

Perception of Control

Larry routinely felt he did not have control over the choices in his life. In reality, he was expected to comply with the discipline and rules of his adopted parents even when they were brutal. The following are vignettes from his life-story

that provide evidence that he believed he did not have control over circumstances in his life.

Larry at the age of five was taken from the home of his birth mother by an aunt and uncle who later adopted him. His adopted parents were emotionally and sometimes physically abuse to him. He was assigned daily chores while his siblings were free to play. He was required to give up sports and jobs to care for his younger siblings. His adopted mother borrowed money from him and never repaid it. Larry felt trapped in this situation. He indicated he didn't dare complain or he would be in "big trouble," meaning physical punishment, grounding, or extra chores. Larry felt he had no choice but to obey their wishes.

Larry transferred to a large midwestern university for his junior and senior years in order to wrestle at a higher level of competition. He worked full time, went to school full time, worked out with the wrestling team full time, and had a serious relationship with a girl friend. He could not wrestle competitively with the team, his girl friend became pregnancy, and he was failing academically. Larry said that during that period of time, he felt his situation "was almost hopeless." He felt he had no options.

Perceptions of Positive Outcome and Effort Independence

Larry viewed outcome and effort as independent of each other. When Larry was attending the university his junior and senior year, working long hours, practicing with the wrestling team, and dating, he had no time left for studying. He was academically ineligible to wrestle with the team. He did not see a relationship between the lack of study time and poor grades, but rather, felt his poor grades were a result of his inability.

The one area in which Larry appeared see a relationship between positive outcome and effort was in his wrestling. However, his effort was actually for the purpose of covering his personal pain and was used as a defensive mechanism to protect himself from experiencing debilitating emotional distress. It was not used explicitly to produce a positive outcome. Surprisingly, his diligence resulted in a state champion. In college, although he continued to train and continued to wrestle well, academic ineligibility and illnesses at critical competition times kept him from winning championships and receiving additional public recognition. Since his training efforts were not rewarded with medals and titles, he believed positive outcome and effort were independent.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Most Learned Helpless individuals simply give up when they feel they are unsuccessful. Larry, on the other hand, was not permitted by his adopted parents to simply quit. When Larry received a "D" in high school he was severely punished. So he did enough to make at least "C's" to avoid punishment. However, when he found himself in college in what he called "a hopeless situation," he no longer needed parental permission to quit nor feared their reprisal. He dropped out of college and joined the army.

Summary of Larry's Learned Helplessness

Larry consistently demonstrated in the telling of his past life-story that he believed he lacked the ability to succeed personally and academically. He believed he was successful because others let him slip by and that he was failing because he did not have the ability. He believed situations in his life were not within his control, and he did not see a relationship between outcome and effort. Eventually he just quit trying, dropped out of college and joined the army. This demonstrates that Larry was Learned Helpless in the past. His Learned Helpless state continued until approximately his late twenties.

Larry's Verification of Current Mastery Orientation

The following section provides a summary of the evidence from Larry's life-story that enabled the researcher to identify him as currently Mastery Oriented.

Larry began to make the transition in his mid to late twenties when he began to believe in and trust his ability. As a result of his new perception of himself, he began to feel successful. He experienced success in the army, success in his marriage, and finally academic success in college. He began to believe he had ability and was experiencing success that was a result of his personal effort. When he consistently was able to trust his ability, take control of his life, recognize the relationship between outcome and effort, and persist even in difficult situations, the transition to Mastery Orientation was complete.

Some of the evidence that Larry is currently Mastery Oriented is found in his current perceptions of recent successes and failures and some of the evidence is found in his new perceptions of his past successes and failures.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Larry has a new perception of his abilities. As Larry looks back he can now acknowledge his success in high school and can credit his ability for this success. He no longer feels his

good grades were because of an easy high school or because "teachers don't like to fail seniors." He believes he had the ability to earn his grades. He now credits his freshman and sophomore success to his ability, not just to a nurturing professor. Also, he no longer blames his lack of ability for his academic failure his junior and senior year of college. He acknowledges that he failed because he did not make time to study.

Larry also recognizes that his wrestling career was a tremendous success. His failure to win an Olympic Gold Medal no longer negates his view of his wrestling successes. He said, "If I could brag . . . I know wrestling really well. I worked hard to earn my stripes." He credits his ability for his successful wrestling career.

Larry feels successful in his life. He indicates he has a good marriage, a wonderful son, and a career he really enjoys. He is a successful teacher and successfully continues his education.

Perception of Control

Larry spent the first twenty years of his life feeling that many of his life circumstances were as out of his control. He currently feels he has control over his personal and academic circumstances and has a new view of past control issues.

Some of the reasons Larry felt his life was out of control as a child and young adult is because he did not see that he had options. He was not permitted to continue living with his birth mother, or to refuse to do an unfair portion of household chores, or to refuse to loan his adopted mother money, or to choose where he would live after his adopted parents divorced, or to participate in after school activities.

Larry now trusts his abilities and trusts himself to make wise choices. He has proven to himself that he is capable of wise choices. He chose a career he loves. He chose a wife who is his companion and best friend. He chose a faith that governs his life. He feels that he is in control of his life.

Perceptions of Outcome and Effort Dependence

Larry now views outcome and effort as mutually dependent. This is evidenced by his new attitude toward effort and outcome in his past and the effort he intentionally invests in success currently.

Larry now has a new perspective of his failure in college his junior and senior year. He recognizes that he was balancing an incredible load and gives himself credit for doing it as well as he did. He knows the reason for his failure was his time commitment to work, his girl friend, and wrestling and his lack of time commitment to his studies. Making this connection was

very important for him because he no longer blamed what he perceived as his inability for his failure.

Larry unconsciously always recognized the connection between outcome and effect in athletics. However, because he believed not earning an Olympic medal negated his wrestling career as successful, he then was not free to recognize that training produces winning. Since he now views his wrestling career as successful, he is also able to recognize the relationship between outcome and effort.

He also recognizes the relationship between outcome and effort in his relationship with his wife. He indicated many friends and family members concentrated only on their careers which resulted in divorce. He indicated they had "a true affection" for each other, but knew for this to continue, they needed to nurture their mutual commitment.

He attributes his success in his career to his effort, and guards his time from heavy involvement in curricular activities, such as coaching, to enable him to have time to devote to teaching.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Larry feels confident in his abilities and demonstrates his confidence by not quitting in the face of difficult situations. Several years ago he was faced with a difficult employment

relationship. He easily could have given up and possibly would have if he were still Learned Helpless. But he did not give up. He worked to build a strong relationship and correct the situation.

He feels a great deal of pride in his successful marriage and career. He is continuing to pursue additional certifications and a graduate degree.

Summary of Larry's Verification of Mastery Orientation

Larry consistently demonstrated in the telling of his current life-story that he is confident in his abilities. In his late twenties, he began to recognize his potential. He had wrestled successfully for the army, he had a successful family situation, and he had returned to college and was experiencing success. He felt he was making wise decisions and had control of his life. He could see the relationship between outcome and effort, and his efforts were reaping success. This demonstrates that Larry is currently Mastery Oriented.

Doug

Doug's Verification of Past Learned Helplessness

The following section provides a summary of the evidence from Doug's life-story that enabled the researcher to identify him as Learned Helpless.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Doug felt he didn't have the ability to succeed. He formed this opinion in early elementary school where he was emotionally abused and inappropriately punished by several teachers. He felt he was abused because he was "stupid." Doug views his educational experience as a failure. He says from first grade on, "they [teachers] let me pass." Even his graduation from high school he viewed as unearned. He said, "I really hadn't done the work. Even if I did graduate, it wasn't the same as the other kids." Doug felt he was an expert at academic failure. He said, "This has been going on since first grade."

Perception of Control

Doug felt he did not have control over the circumstances in his life. He felt he was a victim of abuse in the educational system and was a victim of his own inability. As a victim of his own inability, he felt he was destined to failure in educational

situations and destined to receive mistreatment from others, such as teachers, bosses, and coworkers.

Because he saw himself as a victim, he felt he had no control over his life. He felt he could not control being free from physical and emotional abuse, or control whether or not he learned, or even control having satisfactory relationships with his peers.

Perceptions of Positive Outcome and Effort Independence

Doug viewed outcome and effort as independent of each other. Because he viewed his academic failures as a result of his inability, he was unable to see the value of trying, because his perceived inability would prevent a successful outcome. Also, because of his learning disability, conventional methods of learning were not successful for him. Thus, his best efforts produced failure, verifying to him that outcome and effort are independent.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Doug's response to his failures was to quit trying. He went through the motions of school, was passed along, but didn't try again. He simply quit believing he could contribute anything to his success and thus felt shame and humiliation.

Summary of Doug's Learned Helplessness

Doug consistently demonstrated in the telling of his past life-story that he believed he lacked the ability to succeed. He also believed he could not change his ability; therefore, he believed he had no control over his life. He did not recognize a relationship between outcome and effort. To avoid feelings of humiliation and shame after failing, he simply quit trying. This demonstrates that Doug was Learned Helpless in the past. His Learned Helpless state continued until approximately his mid-thirties.

Doug's Verification of Current Mastery Orientation

The following section provides a summary of the evidence from Doug's history that enables the researcher to identify him as currently Mastery Oriented.

Doug began to make the transition to Mastery Oriented in his personal life in his mid-twenties when he began to believe in and trust his ability. As a result of his new perception of himself, he began to experience successful employment. He transitioned academically in his mid-thirties, again when he began to believe in his abilities, and as a result began to experience academic success. He was so certain that he could not be successful academically because of his learning disabilities that it took him longer to believe in himself

academically. When he could consistently trust his ability, take control of his life, recognize the relationship between outcome and effort, and persist even in difficult situations, the transition to Mastery Orientation was complete.

Some of the evidence for Doug's Mastery Orientation is found in his current perceptions of recent successes and failures, and some of the evidence is found in his new perceptions of his past successes and failures.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Doug has a new perception of his abilities. He has returned to college to complete a bachelors degree. He did not work his freshman year; he simply concentrated on his studies saying, "I needed to get my confidence up." He had a successful first year with the exception of his English Proficiency test, which he took several times before passing. Doug's academic insecurities began to be replaced by academic confidence. He indicates, "I know I'm better than I was."

Doug indicates his view of failure has changed. He said, "You begin to stop thinking it's always you that caused the problem. You begin to look around and see the same thing happening to others and don't take it so personally anymore."

Doug has proven to himself, through hard work and college success, that he does have the ability to be successful in

college. He indicates that even though occasionally he has academic difficulties, that overall he feels confident in his abilities. His perception that he does have the ability to succeed in spite of some difficulties is evidence of his present Mastery Orientation.

Perception of Control

Doug spent the first twenty years of his life viewing his life circumstances as out of his control. He currently perceives that he has control over his personal and academic circumstances and has a new view of control issues from the past.

Doug worked as a printer for approximately eight years. He did well in this job, but wanted more. Recognizing that he had a lot to offer and that he had other career options, he made a career change. Doug also recognized that he could take control of his learning disabilities difficulties by using proven corrective techniques.

Perceptions of Outcome and Effort Dependence

Doug now views outcome and effort as mutually dependent. He recognizes that his hard work earned him the outcome of a satisfying and successful career and that his

efforts to learn adaptive learning strategies earned him the outcome of successful academic pursuits.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Doug believes in his abilities, recognizes that he has control over his life, and recognizes the relationship between outcome and effort and thus persists in his current endeavors. Even when situations are difficult academically, he continues to compensate for the difficulty and does not give up. He feels pride in his academic success and anticipates graduation.

Summary of Doug's Verification of Mastery Orientation

Doug consistently demonstrated in the telling of his current life-story that he is confident in his abilities, while recognizing and compensating for his learning disabilities. Because he understands his past academic problems and has experienced success in his career, he trusts his abilities. He feels in control of his life and acknowledges his efforts are rewarded with successful outcomes. This demonstrates that Doug is currently Mastery Oriented.

Ted

Ted's Verification of Past Learned Helplessness

The following section provides a summary of the evidence from Ted's life-story that enabled the researcher to identify him as Learned Helpless.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Ted felt he didn't have the ability to succeed personally or academically. The following are vignettes from his life that provide evidence that he believed he failed because of lack of ability.

Ted's adopted maternal grandfather was very important to him. He was one of the few people that Ted felt really loved him. He found out in a Christmas card that his beloved grandfather had died several months before. I asked Ted why he thought no one told him about his grandfather's death. He said, "I didn't think I deserved it [to know]."

Ted felt he did not deserve the unconditional love of an adult parent figure. Ted's foster family during the last two years of high school met his physical and emotional needs. He says, "She really took good care of me, and I really didn't deserve it." He said, "She was taking on a charity case by then.

Someone with sixteen years of problems that had nothing to do with her. She was just a loving and caring person."

During Ted's childhood, all of his efforts were invested in survival. He lived in thirteen foster homes and three institutions from age six to eighteen. His memories of school consist of sitting in class and day-dreaming about how he "wished things were" and "feeling like a failure."

Perception of Control

Ted routinely felt he did not have control over his life. He experienced lack of control regularly as his residence changed, his school changed, his social worker changed, his friends changed, etc. The following are vignettes from his life-story that provide evidence that he believed he did not have control over circumstances in his life.

Ted ran away many times. The first time was when his adopted father took him from school without explanation to live with him rather than his adopted mother. The police returned him to this adopted father's home. Ted learned that if you run away, the police come after you. He learned this lesson several times in his life; eventually he stopped running away and reasoned he could not control where he lived. He felt trapped in this situation. .

Ted lived with thirteen family and in three institutions in his life. With each move he had no choice. He was told where to live and when to move. Many times Ted was hungry and had to steal food. He saw no other option. When he was sixteen, he had run to his girl friend's home for asylum and refused to leave. Eventually he was permitted to stay. Even then he did not realize he had controlled this situation, because his efforts were focused on surviving in a more pleasant environment.

Perceptions of Positive Outcome and Effort Independence

Ted viewed outcome and effort as independent. Any effort he made to better his situation or even get away from a bad situation was rewarded with punishment. He either was subjected to police intervention, or relocation, or other forms of punishment. He soon learned that his efforts did not produce favorable outcome. Thus, an interdependence between positive outcome and effort was not established.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Ted felt he was a personal failure. He felt his life situation was "hopeless." He never put forth any effort in school, but his school changed so often that it didn't seem to

matter. He also experienced shame resulting from feeling he didn't belong anywhere.

Summary of Ted's Learned Helplessness

Ted consistently demonstrated in the telling of his past life-story that he believed he lacked the ability to succeed personally or academically. He believed he had no control over the circumstances in his life. He did not see a relationship between outcome and effort; he simply tried to survive from one new situation to another. He also experienced shame as a result of his perception of inability and his lack of belonging. This demonstrates that Ted was Learned Helpless in the past. His Learned Helpless state continued until approximately his early twenties.

Ted's Verification of Current Mastery Orientation

The following section provides a summary of the evidence from Ted's history that enabled the researcher to identify him as currently Mastery Oriented.

Ted began to make the transition to Mastery Oriented in his early twenties when he began to believe in and trust his ability. As a result of his new perception of himself, he became willing to take risks and experience success in his business and in learning situations. When he consistently was able to trust

his ability, take control of his life, recognize the relationship between outcome and effort, and persist even in difficult situations, the transition to Mastery Orientation was complete.

Some of the evidence that Ted is currently Mastery Oriented is found in Ted's current perceptions of recent successes and failures and some of the evidence is found in his new perceptions of his past successes and failures.

Perception of Successes and Failures

Ted has a new perception of his abilities. As Ted looks back at the incident of his grandfather's death being concealed from he realizes he has changed his perception (from) he "didn't deserve it [to know]." He now recognizes that his adopted mother withheld the information because she is a very selfish person. She was caught up in her own life and her own tragedy, and she didn't care about him.

Ted previously viewed himself as "stupid." Now he sees himself as intelligent. In fact when I asked him how he viewed his intelligence now, he said, "Well, I'm in MENSA." Ted is successfully completing a bachelor's degree with a double major in business and psychology. He will graduate in May with honors.

Ted describes himself as successful. He attributed his success to his ability and hard work. He feels that he has

learned a lot over the years and that experience has been a good teacher. He also recognizes that he is successful as an entrepreneur. He indicates that his current success in business is because he was prepared to meet the challenges of the security business and it was the right time for private security; the two met and he is a success.

Perception of Control

Ted spent the first twenty years of his life viewing his life circumstances as out of his control. He indicated he decided not to be a victim. He described victims as helpless and said he is not helpless. He indicated he birthed his business with \$5,000 of capital. He bought a used car, a used typewriter, and opened the doors. He indicated he did everything at first. He patrolled, sold service, kept the books, etc. It was a one-man operation.

He also indicated he took control of his life by making wise decision about his personal life, his education, and his business. He said no longer was he at the mercy of social services.

When the researcher ask Ted about the control he had over his life now, he said, "I had been so second-rate all my life. I wanted to be first-rate for a change, and nothing was

going to keep me from doing that. That was in my control." He feels he has the ability and has taken control over his life

Perceptions of Outcome and Effort Dependence

Ted now views outcome and effort as mutually dependent. This is demonstrated by his new attitude toward effort and outcome. He recognizes that through his hard work, his business and his education are successful. His business is flourishing, and he will soon graduate with honors with a Bachelor's degree.

Responses to Successes and Failures

Ted is feeling confident in his abilities and demonstrating his confidence by not quitting in the face of difficult situations. His business in the late 80s was in Chapter Eleven Bankruptcy. He could have walked away at that time, but didn't. Instead he persisted, received wise financial council, followed the council, and turned his business around. He feels pride in his abilities and in his accomplishments.

Summary of Ted's Verification of Mastery Orientation

Ted consistently demonstrated in the telling of his current life-story that he is confident in his abilities. He feels proud of his success in his career, his success in his marriage,

and his success in his college studies. He has taken control of his life and is making wise choices for himself. He recognizes that it is through his hard work that he is successful and continues to work toward his life's goals even in difficult times. This demonstrates that Ted is currently Mastery Oriented.